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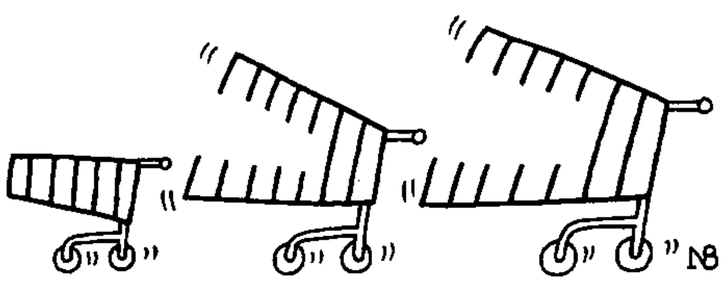

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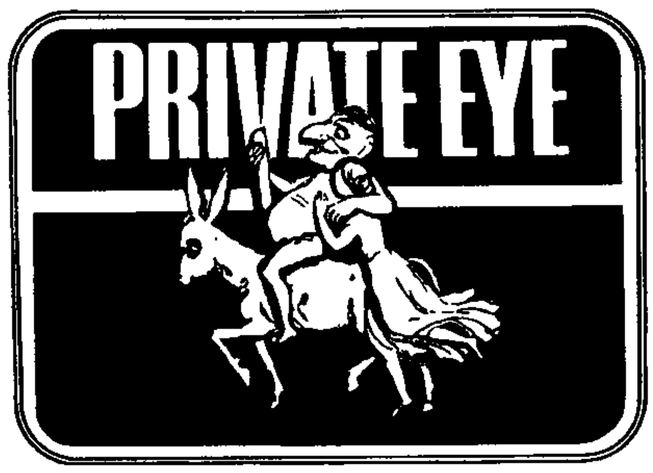

Comical weapons...

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ALL the government's arguments for PFI – that private finance initiative buildings are cheaper, better constructed and better value for money – have been demolished by the government's own audit commission.

The report published on 15 January examined the first 17 PFI projects for schools and found that in every single one there was no improvement on the traditional methods of procurement. In some cases the old system would actually have been preferable.

The report infuriated the bright young schools minister David Miliband, who described it as "old news". No doubt he was specially annoyed since it was he who at last year's Labour party conference announced (in defiance of the conference's own resolutions) that all future school building projects would have to be carried out through PFI.

Meanwhile, who at the audit commission will have to pay the price for such a monstrous assault on the government's beloved PFI? The new chairman of the commission, James Strachan, the partner of arts minister Baroness Blackstone, has only just taken up his job and can't possibly be blamed for the PFI report. The long-suffering controller of the audit commission, Sir Andrew Foster, was until recently a bit of a favourite in Labour circles, but he has already announced that he will stand down some time this year. Whether he will get the job he hopes for in the health care or social care inspectorate is still not clear.

PS: The commission didn't name any of the PFI contractors involved and told the *Eye* the report "is not a name and shame exercise": the PFIs were deliberately kept anonymous.

However, the report is based on the first wave of school projects which were dominated by Jarvis. It won eight of the first 16 contracts. Just as the firm's schools work is being exposed as shoddy, however, the government is handing it swathes of London Underground track via its membership of the Tubelines consortium.

THE *Eye* said Virgin Cross Country's new autumn timetable would be a total shambles (1062) – and lo, it has come to pass.

In addition to the 106 rail services being axed to make the trains run on time (*sic*), 11 places (including Portsmouth, Swansea and Blackpool) will vanish from the Cross Country map and some trains will "pick up only" at Oxford, Lancaster, Wakefield and other important stations.

How long before Virgin employs bouncers to keep "customers" off the trains?

TESTIFYING to the Savile inquiry last week, Grocer Heath became most indignant at the suggestion that he had in any way authorised the Bloody Sunday massacre. It was, he harrumphed, "absurd to suggest that Her Majesty's government intended or was prepared to risk the events which occurred".

In which case perhaps one of the expensive QCs cross-examining Heath should ask about his comments on *Newsnight* five years ago following the death of Deng Xiaoping. When Jeremy Paxman suggested that "he killed rather a lot of people in Tiananmen Square, didn't he?", the Grocer replied: "There was a crisis in Tiananmen Square after a month in which the civil authority had been defied and they took action about it. Very well, we can criticise it in exactly the same way as people criticise Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland."

Heath subsequently insisted, however, that he did indeed criticise the "action" in Tiananmen Square, which took place on the direct orders of Deng Xiaoping. From which the only inference to be drawn is that he thinks the head of government who presided over Bloody Sunday deserves to be condemned in "exactly the same way" – the man in question being, of course, Sir Edward "Grocer" Heath.

THOSE frustrated by Tony Blair's reluctance to order a cricket boycott of Zimbabwe should remember that he has never taken a tough line against president Robert Mugabe over human rights abuses when our own financial or sporting interests are at stake.

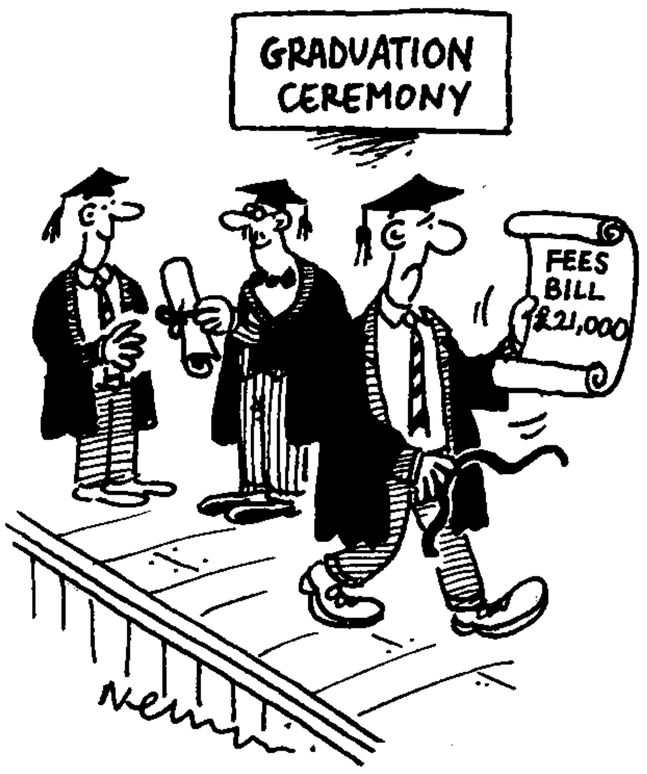
In January 2000 the prime minister overruled the then foreign secretary Robin Cook by giving the go-ahead for the sale of spare parts to Zimbabwe for British hawk fighter jets. They were used in the war in the Republic of Congo, which cost tens of thousands of lives.

"CHILD Porn Squad Opens Files for *Sunday Express*: WE NAME THE FIVE EVIL MEN." Salivating readers who bought the *Express* on the strength of this "exclusive" last weekend, expecting to learn the names of MPs and TV presenters who are rumoured to be under investigation, may have felt rather cheated. The evil men in question turned out to be such household names as Hanny Ingganata, R.W. Kusuma and Boris Greenberg – "the world's most evil child pornographers... [who] can today be unmasked by the *Sunday Express*."

Quite a scoop nevertheless: except that they were unmasked as long ago as April 2000 after their indictment in Texas in connection with child-porn on the Internet, a fact widely reported at the time.

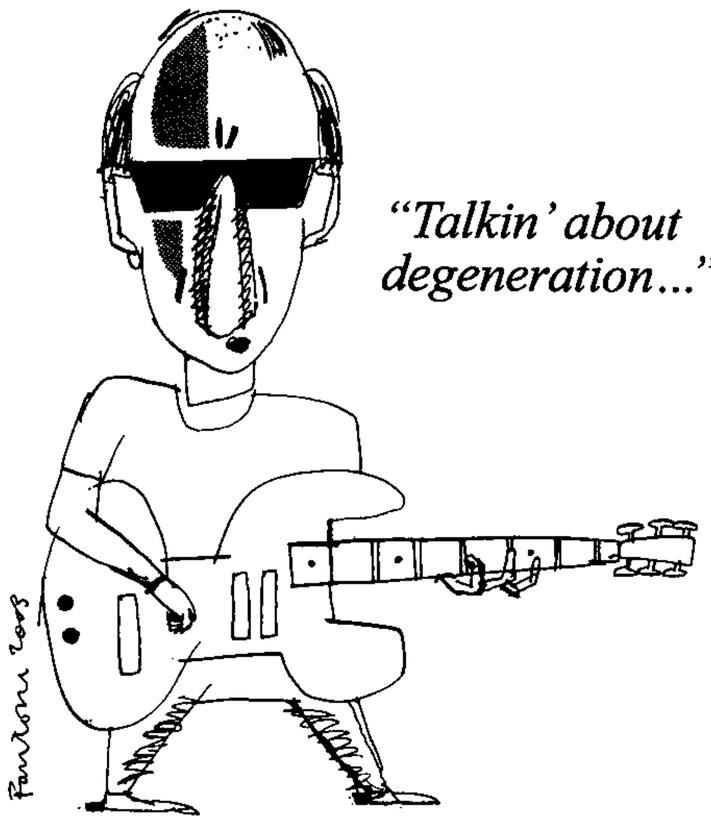
An accompanying editorial in last Sunday's *Express* was headed: "Protect Us From the Porn Peddlers Blighting the Net." How lucky for the editor that Richard Desmond's own notorious fantasy121 website, which had a whole section featuring "Teen Angels", recently closed down "due to unforeseen circumstances".

And, of course, the "sick trade" denounced by the *Express* is entirely different from the wholesome brand of porn promoted by Dirty Des's own "Young Girls" stable of magazines, which are advertised as "barely legal teens for the connoisseurs of young beauty".



● **Private Eye is changing web servers on Friday 24 January. There may be some downtime over the weekend.** ***(What that? Ed.)***

NEWS



"Talkin' about degeneration..."

WHY did Pete Townshend decide of his own accord to go public on his visit to a paedophile website, releasing a statement to newspapers after reports that "a world-famous rock star" was on a list of police suspects?

Townshend claimed he had merely been doing research, and that "some of the things I have seen on the Internet have informed my book which I hope will be published later this year", although he admitted his career was probably "fucked". He also claimed to have "predicted many years ago that what has become the Internet would be used to subvert, pervert and destroy the lives of decent people."

He certainly did – most notably on his "concept" album *Psychoderelict*, which was released in 1993. A sprawling mixture of drama and music, it featured songs about "the grid", a global virtual reality system which distorted the perceptions of its users.

But as Who fan and *Eye* reader Gary Percival has pointed out, *Psychoderelict* contains a few other oddities – not least its storyline, which concerns Ray High, a fading rock star whose career has dwindled since his glory days writing futuristic musicals in the 1970s. He exchanges letters with a 12-year-old girl (played by *Dead Ringers'* Jan Ravens) who sends him naked pictures of herself. He tells her that "something awful happened to me as a child."

The child turns out to be a journalist and the ensuing Porno Pen-Pals scandal threatens to destroy High's career. However, his records are rereleased and start "selling like mad" and it turns out that he and his manager engineered the entire thing to revitalise his career and get him back in the public eye. As his manager says at the end of the record: "It worked, that's all that matters. He's in his element. This is just the beginning. Tours, TV, toot and tarts."

Like much of Townshend's more recent solo work, *Psychoderelict* sank without trace. The online record store Amazon do, however, have one copy available. Perhaps the police officers in charge of Mr Townshend's case should order it and have a listen.

"It's been a bit of a disappointment, pornography-wise"

Street Of Shame

THE *Guardian*'s "Fuck Cilla Black" cover by Turner prize winner Gillian Wearing attracted nearly 1,000 complaints from readers. And in a straw poll nearly two-thirds of the paper's own staff said it should not have been published.

The following day's *Guardian* devoted three pages to the furore, including a half-hearted defence from its commissioner, features editor Ian Katz. "Having persuaded the artists to take up our challenge, we felt the spirit of the exercise required that we give them their heads as far as possible," he wrote.

Unfortunately the same rules do not apply to the *Guardian*'s readers, one of whom initiated a debate on the topic on the "talkboards" section of the paper's website. It appeared under the succinct title of "Cunt Gillian Wearing" – and was quickly deleted by the paper on ground of taste.

A GUCCI advertisement in the new issue of *Vogue* shows a young man gazing hungrily at the crotch of model Carmen Kass, who has pulled down her knickers to reveal pubic hair shaved into a "G".

How different from the home life of *Daily Mail* editor Paul Dacre! The poor chap was so overwhelmed that he devoted the whole of page three last Wednesday to a tirade against the "sleazy stunt", illustrated with not one but two pictures of a nearly naked Ms Kass. Though her pubic hair was obscured by the *Mail* "for decency's sake", there was still plenty of her flesh for readers to enjoy.

Gucci boss Tom Ford was also responsible for the famous perfume ad of Sophie Dahl writhing ecstatically, naked but for a pair of high heels – which, as the *Mail*'s rant noted, was the most complained about in the Advertising Standards Authority's history. "The authority's ruling council finally ordered the removal of all billboard posters on the grounds that the ad was offensive and degrading to women."

Not offensive enough, however, to rule it out of a jokey two-page quiz elsewhere in that day's *Mail* featuring photos of 13 famous women stark naked: "AND HERE'S THE NUDES... But can you put the face to the figure?" Above the supposedly degrading image of Sophie was the cheerful caption: "This model's much talked-about figure means there's never a Dahl moment." So that's all right then.

But Dacre's frenzy had not abated. The next day he ran another full-page rant (this time by Bel Mooney), with an even bigger reproduction of Carmen Kass's Gucci picture. "The people behind this advert," Bel raged, "are no better than pimps and those who advertise sexual services in phone boxes."

Or, perhaps, than Pecksniffian editors who deplore the "sleazy" picture but keep finding excuses to print it yet again?

JEFFREY Archer has at last reimbursed the *Daily Star* for the damages and costs he took off it in 1987. With interest, the payment is thought to be about £2.5m. But one aspect of the negotiations between Archer and Richard "Dirty" Desmond has not been revealed.

Jeffrey's son James – the former Flaming Ferrari, now banned from the City for life for share-rigging – approached Dirty Des with a quintessentially Archeresque proposal. To settle the matter once and for all without any money changing hands, Desmond could have, for free, serialisation rights to Archer's next novel.

Amazingly, Desmond somehow managed to resist this alluring offer.

"MAKE no mistake about the import of Neil Wallis's resignation as editor of the *People*," Roy Greenslade writes in the *Grauniad*. "It is a mortal blow to morale within Trinity-Mirror."

Trinity-Mirror bosses "want us to believe that they are relaxed about his departure", Greenslade adds – the implication being that they are actually scared witless at his defection to the *News of the Screws*. A suggestion by one Trinity executive that Wallis was "a little too passionate", according to Greenslade, illustrates "a breathtaking naivety about a characteristic which is surely a plus for any editor".

But Neil "Wolfman" Wallis has another characteristic which is surely not a plus, though Greenslade's hysterical eulogy didn't even hint at it: he's a blundering berk. Highlights from his reign at the *People* include the notorious splash about the Bulger killers, based on faked documents, and his equally notorious paparazzo shots of a nude Sara Cox honeymooning on a private island. The photos clearly breached the PCC code on privacy, as Wallis knew perfectly well since he was a member of the privacy committee at the time – but he claimed that he was too stupid to understand the rules.

Still, Wallis has had one triumph: last year he presented himself as the champion of investigative journalism after winning a legal battle to publish titbits about the sex-life of a "household name" football star. Alas, his moment of glory soon turned into farce when it transpired that the household name was, er, Gary Flitcroft.

All this and a plummeting circulation too – down more than 13 percent last year, by far the worst decline of any Sunday newspaper. Is it any wonder Trinity-Mirror executives feel relaxed about the departure of this towering genius?

Damp squid for the cities

But what in the end has been delivered by the Executive? Yesterday, the Cities Review was published. It is a damp squib *The Scotsman*

PHIL HALL, Trinity Mirror's latest high-profile management recruit, was fulsome in his praise for Piers Morgan in the *Press Gazette*. "When you see something like Piers Morgan's front page last week on oil, you just think: 'That's so fantastic. He is a newspaper genius.' "

Up to a point, Lord Copper. The piece in question, a lengthy pun on the names of oil companies purporting to be a statement by George Bush which began "I Shell not Exxonerate Saddam Hussein" (*geddit?*), had been knocking around on email and the internet for several months before Morgan stuck it on his front page. It dates back to at least 1999 when it appeared in the Tennessee-based anarchist newsletter *Fifth Estate* as an attack on the first Gulf war started by George W's father.

Still, if a trick works once, it's worth doing again – as we noted in the last *Eye*. The last time Morgan used the contents of his inbox for the front page (a picture of Argentinian footballers holding handbags), he earned a gong for Best Picture from the *What the Papers Say* awards. For 2003 expect *Mirror* front page exclusives on dancing hamsters, bonsai kittens and 20 reasons why a beer is better than a woman.

O.B.N.

THE appointment of Rebekah Wade as editor of the *Sun* (prop: R. Murdoch) provided an ideal opportunity for a splendid piece of Arslikahn by media commentator Phillipa Kennedy in the *Times* (prop: R. Murdoch).

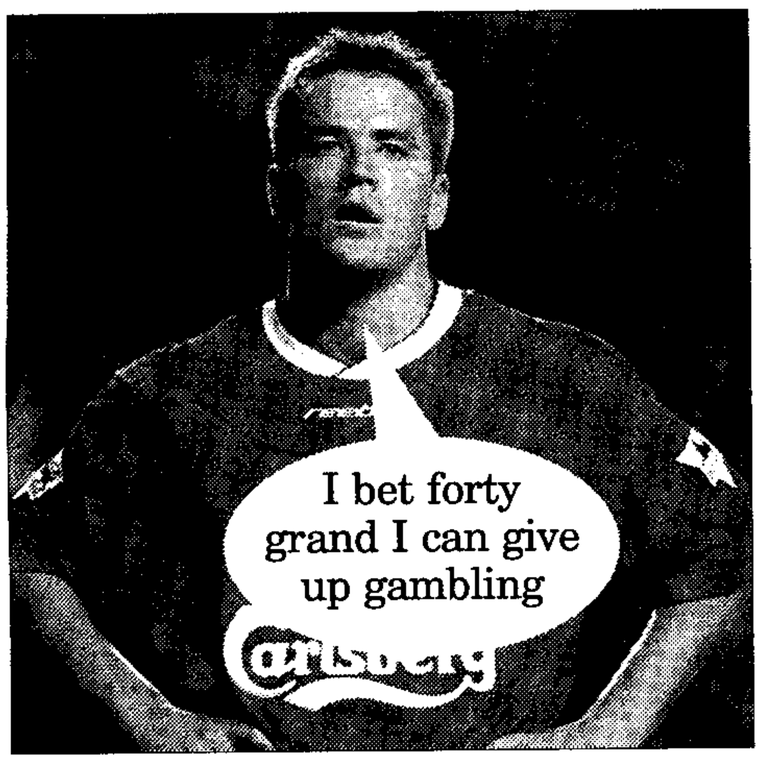
Her *Hello!*-style portrait of the incoming editor – "Wade, who married the actor Ross Kemp last year, has never made a secret of the fact that she would like to start a family one day. At 34 it must surely be on her mind" – was outdone only by her shameless tribute to the man who pays both their wages, who she called "a strong family man".

As any media commentator knows, Rupert Murdoch likes families so much he left his wife to start a second one at the age of 70...

NEWSPAPERS were united in their outrage about the mooted ban on photographing children during nativity plays – as well they might be, considering how much they rely on snaps of the under-tens to fill their pages.

The press complaints commission's (PCC) code clearly states that "where material about the private life of a child is published, there must be justification for publication other than the fame, notoriety or position of his or her parents or guardian". That didn't stop the *Mail* and the *News of the World* printing last week's vital news story that an eight-year-old boy had visited a museum, and speculating as to whether he got on with his mother Ulrika Jonsson's partner.

Meanwhile over in *Heat* magazine, you could read speculation over how Madonna's six-year-old daughter Lourdes "could so easily inherit her mum's surly attitude on top of her sultry looks"; how actress Reese Witherspoon's "seriously cute daughter Ava, 3" had witnessed an argument between her parents; Kate Moss's baby had gone for a swim; Liam Gallagher's baby had been taken shopping and his two-year-old cousin had built a snowman in a park. The latter story required no fewer than five paparazzi shots by way of illustration, as well as the observation that "Anais has got to be the cutest celebrity toddler around… and just like her mum, she's certainly not camera-shy".



Number crunching

£40,000

■ amount Michael Owen is said to have lost gambling in the last two years

£40,000

■ Michael Owen's basic weekly wage

GALLEY-slaves at the *Sunday Express* have received a despairing memo from their news editor, Jim Murray.

"As you know," he writes, "I organised it so that we could all meet in the conference room at 10am on Tuesdays to have an ideas session. People were asked to come in at 9.30am to give them half an hour to sort out a few ideas. This has been a complete failure because nobody comes in on time..."

Murray believes there's no reason why news stories in a Sunday paper shouldn't be written the previous Tuesday or Wednesday. Indeed, he adds: "I am sure that many stories can be written on Mondays, but they never are." Possibly, er, because most Sunday newspaper hacks don't work on Mondays.

"To avoid delays in the future the editor has introduced a new system to improve the flow of copy," he reveals. "Now my list is broken down into two different sections: written stories and unfinished stories… Finished stories will go into the paper; unfinished ones won't."

Not, of course, that it's always easy to tell the difference in the *Sexpress*.

HACKWATCH

Taki

"VERY embarrassing. I was on holiday, of course. It should never have gone in." Thus *Spectator* editor Boris Johnson MP in the *Times* last week, disowning a recent column by Taki which identified black people as the root of all evil.

Has Boris only just noticed that his vulgar, semi-literate, nouveau-riche columnist is very embarrassing? One embarrassment is that he writes like a drunken Caliban. And then there's the small matter of race. In 1997 Taki described the Puerto Ricans of New York as "a bunch of semi-savages… fat, squat, ugly, dusky, dirty", provoking even his hero Mayor Giuliani to describe the piece as "offensive, disgusting and trash – filled with mind-boggling hatred".

The following year Taki twice referred to a black man as "Sambo". In 2001, when he wrote about the world Jewish conspiracy and described himself as a "soi-disant anti-semite", even his friend and employer Conrad Black felt moved to protest.

On taking over the editorship in August 1999, Boris Johnson was asked about the Sambo affair. "Well, I dunno," he replied, doing his famous impersonation of a gormless chump. "I wasn't editing then… But you're right, on the whole, I'm not mad for that stuff." Yet he's kept him on ever since, and last October he celebrated Taki's "25 glorious years" as a *Spectator* columnist. So presumably Boris must be mad for at least some of this stuff:

16 November 2002: "What tricky times we're living in," Taki muses. "Even my old and best buddy, Charlie Glass, is trying to cut corners. One night in San Lorenzo last week I ran into him in the process of trying to become co-editor of the *Spectator*. The old-fashioned way, that is. He was in the company of Rachel Johnson, sister of the sainted one, who's also known as Mrs Ivo Dawnay. 'Where is Mr Ivo Dawnay?' I demanded of the sainted one's sister. 'He's in Kenya trying to establish democracy,' came the answer from this latter-day Penelope. Well, I guess that gives Charlie quite an open field, because democracy is as likely to come to bongo-bongo land as I am to send a Concorde ticket to my children."

Alas! Soon afterwards the residents of bongo-bongo land rather spoil Taki's amusing quip by electing a new government.

23 November: "It's goodbye to the good old Giuliani days," Taki writes from New York, "and hello to the Bloomberg era. Actually, it's not as bad as London, but quickly getting there. Mind you, crime statistics are down and even the murder rate is below 600, but the sense of impending doom and deepening shadows is overwhelming." What causes this premonition? Surprise, surprise: it's Taki's fear that the new mayor won't be tough enough on "blacks and Hispanics".

7 December: Taki attends the New York wedding of Patricia Herrera and Gerrit Lansing Jr, a "union of beauty and bloodlines": the mother of the groom is "from an old Philadelphia family, with the kind of friendliness and warmth that very old money provides", and the bride's father is a "scion of an old and noble Spanish-Venezuelan family". Our correspondent reckons it may have been the last great ball of his lifetime. "I say this because – at least here in the Bagel – the barbarians are now inside the gates, the old guard having gone the way of Napoleon's, with the nouveau riche and vulgar being the ones giving the parties." Or, in Taki's case, going to them.

14 December: "To all of you *Spectator* readers, the happiest of Christmases," Taki writes cheerily. But his festive goodwill doesn't extend to journalists, who spend their lives "discharging hot air, humbug and hyperbole", and displaying "egotism, rudeness, ignorance" – characteristics which the fastidious columnist simply can't abide.

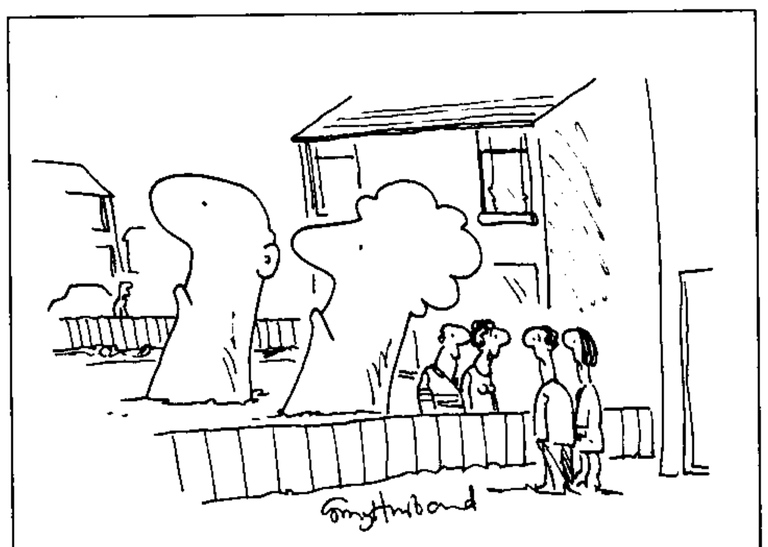
28 December: Taki finds that Cherie Blair reminds him of Evita Peron: "Both took the easy way up, via their hubbies." As opposed to Taki, of course, who took the hard way up via an inherited fortune from his dad. "Not that I'm calling Cherie Blair a whore," he adds gallantly. "She couldn't be one even if she wanted to; not good-looking enough." Hillary Clinton is another Evita, "although she, too, could not make a living from the world's oldest profession because of ugly looks and terrible ankles". True, she did win election to the senate in her own right, but that's only because "her natural constituency is Noo Yawk, a place full of Hispanics, blacks…"

4 January 2003: Drunkenly driving his new yellow Mini in Gstaad, Taki crashes into a tree. He then heads off to a nightclub, but is arrested on returning home at 5am. "If this was an omen," he writes from Switzerland, "2003 looks bleak. There's absolutely no snow, the place is crawling with rich nobodies…" Er, quite.

11 January: "It seems almost obscene to be sitting in bucolic Gstaad rubbing it in, but boy, oh boy, was Enoch – God rest his soul – ever right! Now there's a man who was tough on the causes of crime long before crime had been Blaired." And what is the cause of crime? It's Taki's old friend Sambo again: "Britain is being mugged by black hoodlums, people are being cut down in the streets à la Mogadishu in the early Nineties… What politically correct newspapers refer to as 'disaffected young people' are black thugs, sons of black thugs and grandsons of black thugs… West Indians were allowed to immigrate after the war, multiply like flies, and then the great state apparatus took over the care of their multiplications." No wonder Taki's so glad to be in Gstaad: no darkies! "Kidding aside, I do feel for the good English people back in England," he concludes. "I remember when England used to feel like Switzerland." Kidding aside, eh? So perhaps it was all one of his little jokes.

18 January: Taki comes over all serious. "I don't know what this world is coming to," he wails. "I'm a family man, a provider, I pay my taxes, I'm white… You name it, I'm guilty of it."

"It was a terrible thing," the *Spectator*'s editor now says of Taki's 11 January column. "But what can you do?" Answers on a postcard, please, to Boris Johnson, 56 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LL.



"We got the idea after our holiday in the Easter Isles"

THE NEOPHILIACS

An occasional series about the ceaseless quest for the new new.

"Is gym the new apres-ski?"
— *Evening Standard.*

"Is marriage the new feminism?"
— *Daily Telegraph.*

"Is driving the new smoking?"
— BBC London News.

"If comedy is the new rock'n'roll, celebrities having a bad time is the new elevator music."
— *Daily Telegraph.*

"Tea-drinking has become the new black."
— Catherine Coyle, *The Big Issue in Scotland.*

"Boats are the new country cottages."
— *Evening Standard* Homes & Property supplement.

FORGET cabinet squabbles over higher education funding. While Tony Blair is ever more preoccupied with the looming conflict in the Middle East, another serious domestic crisis is brewing up for him.

A fortnight ago trade union bosses stomped out of talks with the government over the future of the private finance initiative. They were disgruntled at the prime minister's failure to deliver his party conference pledge to provide protection for workers transferring from the public to private sector.

The unions are also furious that chancellor Gordon Brown still refuses to set up the "independent commission" on PFI that the conference voted through last September. Discussions with treasury officials have been desultory and the unions are now holding their fire until Labour's spring conference in Glasgow next month.

At stake is Labour's growing cash crisis. The party is millions in the red, and in the absence of state funding or a rush of "high value donors", only the unions can bail it out. Thus the Dear Leader has instructed old fixer and Downing Street hand Pat McFadden to cobble a deal together with the unions and head off a crisis, just as the fire fighters turn militant again and thousands of party members prepare to rip up their membership cards over Iraq.

McFadden will try to split the mighty Unison public services union and the Transport & General Workers' Union from John Edmonds' GMB and – hey presto – save Labour from financial ruin. When in the past the PM has referred to "those bastards", he has had Edmonds, along with Messrs Gilchrist and Crow, in mind. But with Gordon's mood darkening and rumours of an internal coup growing, the last thing Blair needs along with a war in the Gulf and a series of national fire fighter strikes is a public and final rupture with his party's paymasters.

AN unlikely spat between the ministry of defence and BAE Systems, formerly British Aerospace, grows ominous.

Defence secretary Geoff Hoon, anxious to place a lucrative military order with an American firm, says BAE Systems isn't really a British company, while BAE Systems insists it is. If this row ever comes to the floor of the Commons, what will the Tory MP for Kensington and Chelsea, Michael Portillo, have to say about it?

The now touchy-feely Portillo might want to distance himself from his former incarnation as a raving, right-wing secretary of state for defence.

But who can forget his strenuous batting for Britain in the Gulf state of Qatar when he was the Tories' defence secretary?

In frantic negotiations there in the mid-1990s, he somehow persuaded the foreign minister of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jaber al Thani, to buy an impressive display of armoury from the UK. Central to this package were 12 (later reduced to six) Hawk trainer jets made by, er, BAE Systems. Fortunately for the company and the sheikh, the British government has underwritten the whole deal with Qatar. So, as with former British arms deals with Saddam Hussein, if anything goes wrong with the Qatar deals, the British taxpayer will have to pay up, in this case up to £228m.

By chance, Mr Portillo is now a non-executive director of BAE Systems. And how much does he get for that? According to the quaint rules governing the Commons register of MPs' interests, he doesn't have to say. And so he doesn't.

Mr Portillo will no doubt be keeping a close watch on a legal case still proceeding in Jersey, a notorious tax haven where a £100m fund was recently discovered by the *Observer* and the Campaign Against the Arms Trade to have been set up by the aforementioned Sheikh Hamad.

Did BAE Systems contribute to this fund? This sensitive matter is shrouded in mystery; and when the *Jersey Post* tried to investigate the matter, the editor was promptly issued with threats of proceedings for contempt of court. Perhaps Mr Portillo should use his considerable influence in the firm and in parliament to find the answer.

'Backbiter'

"Washington officials told news network CNN they have intelligence evidence that ties the Algerians to Zarqawi, a one-legged Jordanian who commanded an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan and is now on the run."

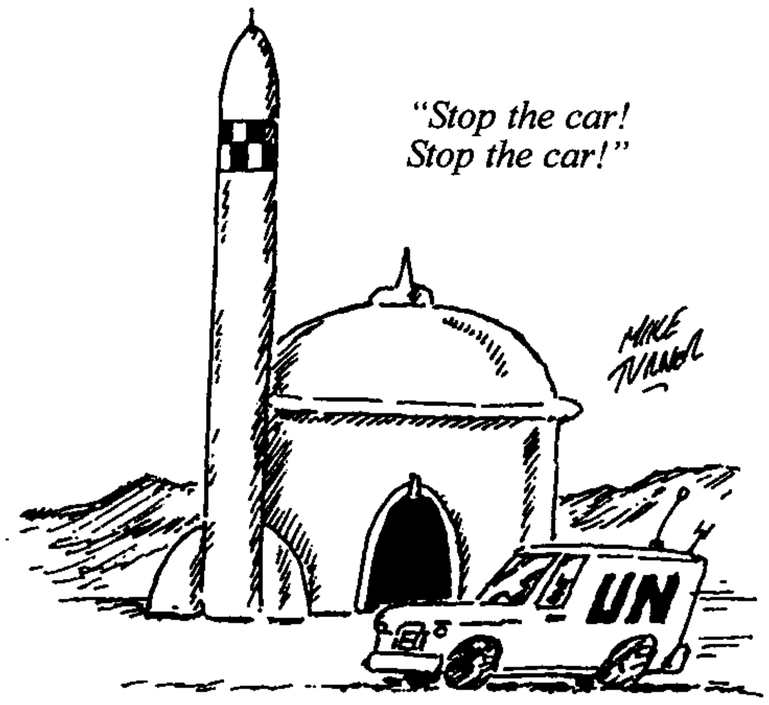
www.thisislondon.co.uk

HONOURS

IT'S no longer surprising perhaps to see Tony Blair rewarding oil and energy company executives in the new year's honours. What is startling is that these honours are awarded for services to the environment.

Phil Watts, chairman of Shell Group, was knighted for his work on the "World Business Council on Sustainable Development". This worthy-sounding body was in fact the main business lobby against further regulation of multinationals at the Johannesburg Earth Summit.

Dr Bill Kyte, Powergen's corporate responsibility boss and a member of the similar business-led "green" talking shop the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development, got an OBE for "services to environmental improvement". Another OBE went to John Mumford, director of BP Oil UK, also for services to the environment. BP's most recent service to the environment was leaking 40,000 litres of petrol into Luton's groundwater, a staggering piece of pollution which led to a £70,000 fine for the firm last October.

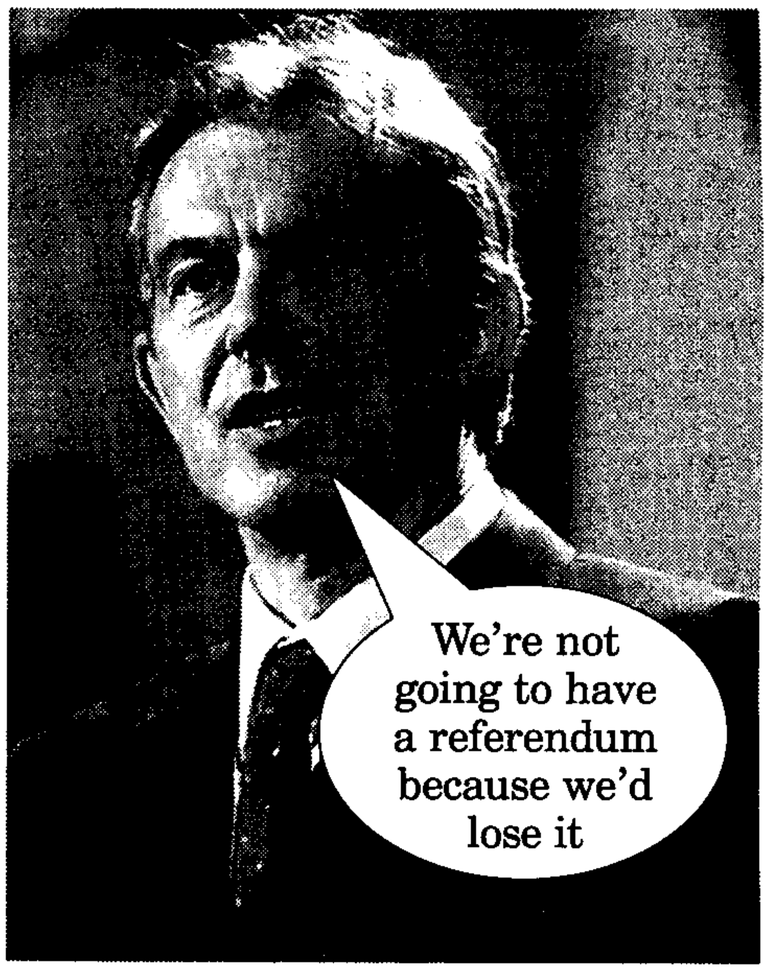


LONDON CALLING

RESIDENTS of some 83,000 households who live within the inner London congestion charge zone are entitled to discounts worth up to £1,170 a year. But how many of those now applying for the cut rate are legitimate is not at all clear.

Libraries within the congestion zone have witnessed a mysterious surge of interest in local electoral registers. The suspicion is that fraudsters are registering for discounts using addresses within the congestion zone, then paying for mail to be redirected to their real addresses outside it.

EURO: BLAIR SPELLS IT OUT



As a redirect costs only £31.50 a year and the discounts are worth up to £1,170, the incentive for the unscrupulous is considerable.

The extent of such abuses may never be known. The Royal Mail tells the *Eye* that it does not monitor requests for redirects by postcode, nor does it look for any unusual patterns. Perhaps it had better start doing so.

HIGH PRINCIPALS

THE departure of North Birmingham College principal Joan Short earlier this month following a scathing Ofsted report must be particularly gratifying for two former lecturers who tried to blow the whistle on the college's shoddy management.

Last August Ofsted inspectors found the leadership and management of the college unsatisfactory and ruled that some areas of learning were "very weak". Deputy principal Ian Douglas – proud holder of one O level and two CSEs – remains on sick leave. He came to the college from a background in managing airlines.

Two members of staff raised concerns about the management (including Douglas's qualifications) as far back as 1999, even going so far as to contact ministers in the department for education and employment (DfEE).

So unconcerned was the government about protecting the identity of the would-be whistleblowers that one of the pair was named in a letter to MP Lynne Jones from the college's chair, telling her that the college knew the staff member had been involved in correspondence with the then DfEE minister Jeff Rooker. After being made redundant the staff member accepted an undisclosed sum in return for withdrawing his allegation of victimisation.

Short's departure makes it even more likely that the touted merger with Sutton Coldfield College will now go ahead.

POLICE 5

THE mystery about former PC Paul Conway, one of the three Lincolnshire officers who sued the *Oldie* for libel and then ended up suing the police's own lawyers for incompetence, can now be cleared up.

The court was told that PC Conway had left the force, but no one could say in what circumstances. Lincolnshire police now confirms that PC Conway was convicted in 2000 at Lincoln crown court for a common assault. The *Eye* understands the offence took place in a street in Stamford in circumstances in which Mr Conway's behaviour suggested that he was tired and emotional.

He was fined, and "required to resign" (which means he keeps his police pension).

HOW PRISON WORKS

LEANNE GIDNEY, an 18-year-old single mother, was found hanging in her prison cell last week after being jailed for stealing £1.

As a heroin addict with previous convictions, she was jailed for such a petty offence not because of the government's "prison works, zero tolerance" drive but because the criminal justice system couldn't do anything else with her.

UK jails, now housing a record 72,500 inmates, are full to exploding. But probation staff, who run the community and treatment-orientated penalties that are supposed to offer an alternative to prison, are about to go on a one-day strike and work-to-rule because they are so overwhelmed by caseloads that have doubled in the past 10 years.

Drug treatment programmes are hugely oversubscribed with offenders waiting anything from six weeks to six months to join one. And there is little point in fining persistent offenders who might be tempted to steal to pay the fine or simply ignore them.

Hence Leanne Gidney ended up where she did for stealing £1.

DOWN THE TUBES

NO SOONER had transport secretary Alistair Darling handed over a third of the London tube to the private sector than one of the firms taking over started to disintegrate.

As private finance initiative (PFI) specialist Amey heads down the plughole, chief executive Brian Staples is scurrying away with a £200,000 pay off. He joins Amey's two previous finance directors. They left after arguing with Staples about the size of the multi-million pound hole in the books.

Amey was one third of Tubelines, the consortium with a £4bn contract to run the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines for the next 30 years. Their partners, Bechtel and Jarvis, propped them up to stop the consortium falling apart. But now the deal is done Amey is attracting corporate raiders like Monte Carlo-based Swiss financier Tito Tettamanti, who is buying up Amey's share of the tube PPP. The last time Tettamanti grabbed a firm – ICN Pharmaceuticals in the US – the result was a rash of lawsuits which made lawyers rich but did little for the company.

The *Eye* asked the department of transport if it had any say over who takes over the firms which will run the tube. "We work with the consortium, Tubelines. Who owns the equity is an issue for Tubelines," said the spokesman, agreeing that takeovers and buyouts among the new tube bosses were "just one of those things" over which the government had no control.

While gaining track underground, Amey has just lost the £50m contract to run the overground track between Paddington and Reading. The government, via Network Rail, thought its performance so expensive and pisspoor it effectively renationalised this busy piece of track by taking the contract in-house.

THE firms taking over the tube may be a grim bunch, but there are some familiar faces among the managers at the Tubelines consortium.

Contract director Andrew Cleaves was a London Underground boss who worked on secondment to former transport secretary Stephen Byers "to communicate the benefits of PPP". One of those benefits will be his new private-sector salary.

Tubelines' director of business planning Alex Foulds was formerly the "PPP transaction manager at London Underground, responsible for developing the contractual performance and payment regimes". Those same "payment regimes" will now pump money into Tubelines to help fund *his* salary.

Martin Brown, Tubelines' health and safety director, came to the firm from the health and safety executive (HSE). This former rail inspectorate manager agreed the "safety case" for the PPP before joining Tubelines.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

THERE might seem no reason why anyone, let alone a British farmer, should bother to recall that this month marks the 40th anniversary of President de Gaulle's famous veto on Britain's bid to join the Common Market in 1963. But if Britain's farmers wonder why, four decades later, they seem to be facing such a bleak future, the anniversary becomes curiously relevant.

Only recently have academic researchers begun to uncover the true story behind de Gaulle's veto. It does much to explain why in 2003 Britain's farmers are so much worse off than French ones.

What has come to light is how desperate de Gaulle and his advisers were becoming in 1963 about the state of French agriculture, on which at that time 25 percent of France's population depended for their living.

Most French farms were still tiny, backward peasant holdings, infinitely less productive than their British counterparts. Even so they were producing more food than France could eat. What terrified de Gaulle was the prospect that, if exposed to competition, most of these small French farmers might go bankrupt. There would be a mass flight from the land. Disaffected countryfolk would swell the left-wing vote. De Gaulle and his colleagues would be buried in a Socialist or even Communist landslide.

The Common Market still had no agricultural policy. If Britain was allowed in, without customs barriers, her farmers would be able to undercut the French, which would only help bring this disaster about. It was therefore vital to keep Britain out until France could set up a common agricultural policy (CAP) specifically designed to help the backward French farmers. Even after 1963 it still took another six years. Other countries were strongly opposed and it was necessary for de Gaulle to veto Britain's entry again in 1967.

Finally, in 1969, France got what she wanted: a CAP which would take up 90 percent of the entire Common Market budget, of which French farmers would get 60 percent. German taxpayers would have to pay to keep French peasants on the land and the Gaullists in power. But the French were cleverer still. They designed the CAP in such a way that, if Britain were now allowed in, she would have to pay the biggest share of all because she imported more of her food from outside Europe than anyone else. Not only would new tariffs force her to buy food from France; levies on her overseas imports would go directly to paying for the CAP.

No sooner had the CAP been agreed than word went out that Britain could join. The next year Edward Heath made the application which led to British entry three years later. For 30 years, despite the lowering of tariffs and Margaret Thatcher's "budget rebate", the CAP has continued to be rigged in favour of France, to the point where the subsidies received by French farmers are still three times greater than those going to their British counterparts. For every pound Britain pays into the CAP, she gets less than 50p back for her own farmers. With successive British governments applying for the minimum subsidies available and France helping her farmers in every way she can, it is not surprising our supermarket shelves groan with French meat, fruit, vegetables and dairy products, largely paid for by British taxpayers, and that British farmers are going to the wall.

In the past half century the year when British farm incomes were in real terms at their highest was 1973. It was the year we joined the Common Market and the CAP.

ONLY a few more MEPs' signatures are needed to trigger an inquiry into whether European Union (EU) aid to fund bureaucrats in Palestine is being illegally siphoned into terrorist activities. This is bad news for EU external affairs commissioner Chris Patten, who in November told the European parliament that he needed an inquiry into the allegations "like a hole in the head".

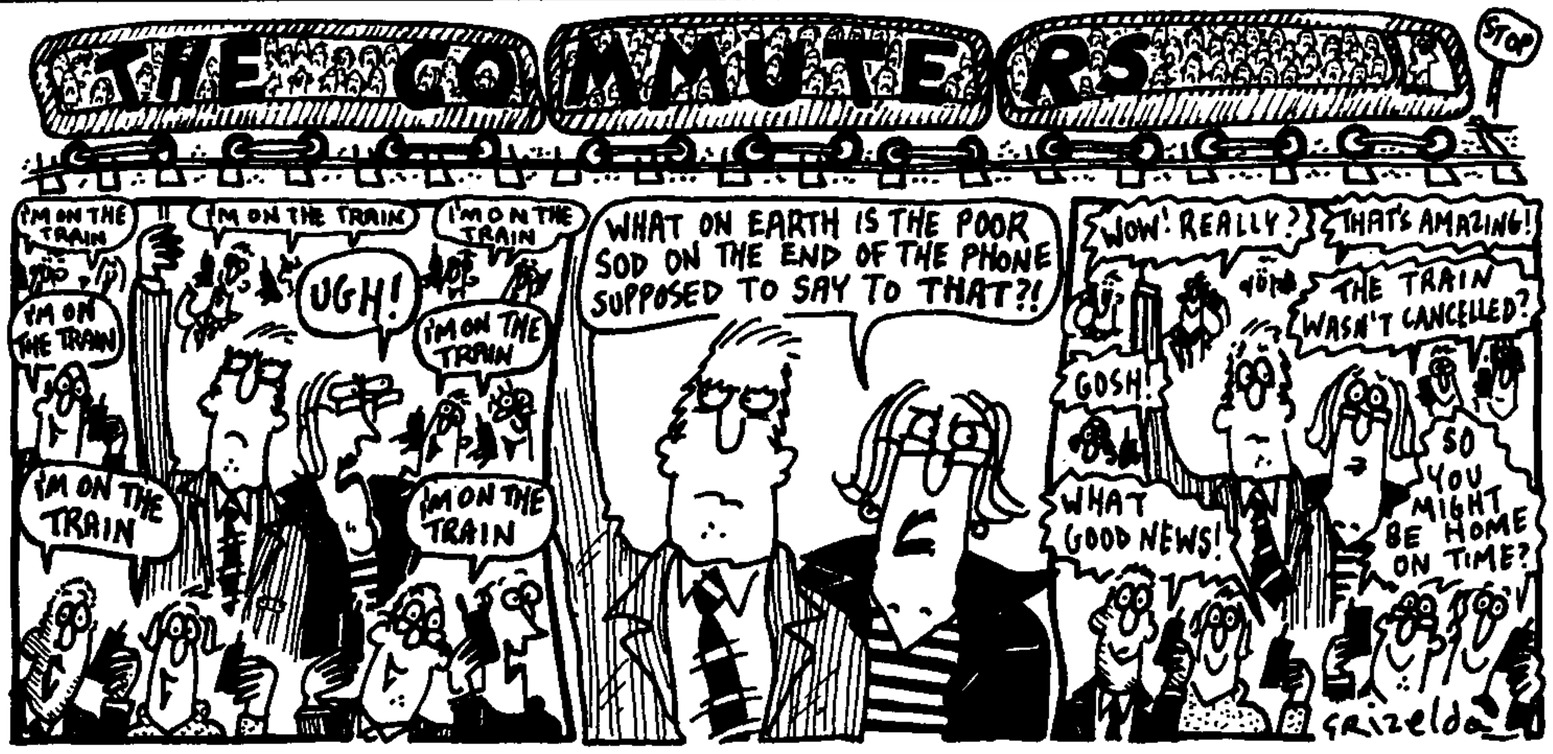
The petition calling for scrutiny of how the Palestinian Authority (PA) uses the monthly 10 million euro donations was launched by British Tory MEP Charles Tannock, Conservative foreign affairs spokesman in the European parliament. He needs the support of 157 MEPs to launch a committee to investigate the allegations: 130 have signed up so far.

The fund is intended to pay the salaries of Palestinian Authority employees. But in May 2002 the Israeli government presented the EU with a report claiming that the PA "is making bad and cynical use of this financial aid and… uses some of the money in order to finance terrorist activities." It said the evidence came from papers seized during the raid on the PA's headquarters during Operation Defensive Shield – when the Israeli military moved into the West Bank and Gaza in March and April. Further documents have been passed to the EU by Dani Naveh, Israeli minister of state for parliamentary affairs. These appear to show bank transfers made to members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which is on the EU's list of terrorist organisations.

Payments were briefly suspended last summer after German Christian Democrat MEP Armin Laschet questioned the way they were being monitored. But after reassurances from the commission that payments were being closely watched – not least by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – they began again. However, the IMF's external relations department has told MEPs it does not monitor the aid budget but simply provides the EU with information about broad developments.

Patten is strongly resisting calls for an inquiry, insisting that the Israeli documents contained no evidence that EU funds were being misused and that the probe could undermine the moderates within the PA. He insists Tannock is "flogging a dead horse".

Tannock's office say it is optimistic that it will attract the magic 157 signatures before the end of January. There would then be a full plenary debate of the European parliament and a vote on whether to set up a temporary committee to investigate whether the financial assistance has broken EU law.



EYE TV

The Daily Politics (BBC2)
The Morning Show (BBC1)

THE latest buzz-phrase among television executives is: "It does what it says on the tin."

The new simplicity begins with the titles. Andrew Neill used to present a series of Westminster reports with the rather louche and mysterious name *The Midnight Hour*, which could just as well have been a discussion about jazz or sex.

Now, however, Brillo is to be found in charge of a format called **The Daily Politics** which, just as it says on the tin, delivers an update of the political situation daily or, anyway, just slightly contradicting the printed label, three times a week. The show has also been brought forward from midnight to around noon as part of the BBC's new morning television strategy. This is a pity because the most exciting thing about *The Midnight Hour* was the possibility that contributing MPs might be pissed. Now there's only the rather more tawdry risk of them having a hangover.

Brillo, whose various hair restorers and lacquers possibly haven't done quite what they said on the tin, co-presents with Daisy Sampson, a former Lib Dem press officer, on a set which comprises a lighted desk with a green sofa behind it, both of them mounted on a red-carpeted dais. The producers have ignored the basic rule of television that Andrew Neill should never co-present with a woman because any double-shot instantly brings to mind a famous photograph frequently printed in the *Eye*.

As for the programme, it's just *The Midnight Hour* in daylight but now driven by the BBC's current obsession with public access. Brillo and Daisy keep pleading for phone-calls and texts and an On The Road team, sent to locations such as Luton Airport, ask "the people" for their view on big political stories. "We want to know your view," Brillo insists although, as usual, it's obvious he'd prefer to ask and answer all the questions himself.

BBC1's own new pre-noon magazine series is called **The Morning Show**. Although it's not a very good show, it certainly is one and is also on in the mornings, so it can't be accused of reneging on the tin's promise.

The co-hosts are Nicki Chapman, a judge from *Pop Idol*, and Robert Nisbet, who did a nice line in camp irony as an entertainment reporter. Such a double-act suggests that it's really supposed to be a showbiz

Table-footballers' wives

programme but because this is the BBC and some people who work there are still worried about Lord Reith's ghost coming down and scolding them, the series has to do the big news stories if there are any.

So, last Wednesday Nicki and Robert were faced with the stabbing of DC Stephen Oake during a counter-terrorism operation in Manchester the night before. Replacing her usual opening grin with a frown, Nicki began: "We're all reeling this morning from the tragic death last night..." Trying to match her in a grimace competition, Robert added: "Our hearts go out to the relatives of all those involved."

The hosts had achieved the first thing all morning television presenters are told to strive for: warmth. But the second is accessibility and so Nicki now spoke the magic words: "But we want to know what you think." Robert set up the subject for the day's big phone and text poll: Should All Police In Britain Be Armed?

With uneasy speed, Nicki and Robert now switched their grimaces for grins and jauntily previewed the items set up for the programme before the policeman was stabbed including "Suits you, Ma'am", a jaunty piece about the trouser-suit worn by the Queen while leaving hospital the day before.

Difficult switches of tone have always been the problem for news magazine shows. Esther Rantzen pioneered the lightning grin/frown switches on *That's Life*, where she would regularly segue from smutty puns to condemning pederasts simply by disclosing or withholding her teeth.

Even Esther, however, never had to negotiate her way between a murder and terrorism investigation and items about the royal tailor and supermarket loyalty cards, which is what Nicki and Robert were now asked to do. And so, at the end of some bit of showbiz froth, Nicki would suddenly say: "But it's a very serious morning. Our thoughts are with all the families." Robert confirmed: "Of course, they are."

Unless bin Laden's really organised, *The Morning Show* won't have that problem every day. But its other basic difficulty will still be there. The term "tabloid television" – the genre to which *The Morning Show* belongs – is often used as a term of abuse but at least this kind of television in America competes with the print tabloids, concocting their own froth. Tabloid TV in Britain just copies what the red-tops have done that morning, often simply reading out their headlines.

Perhaps the tin should read *"The Moron Show"*

'Remote Controller'

GOING LIVE

THE joys of round-the-clock news were all too clear when BBC News 24 went live to Steve Kingston on 8 January as he stood outside the Wood Green flat used by alleged ricin plotters.

"What's the latest?" he was asked.

"To be honest, it's pretty quiet," the newshound replied.

"Do we know what led police to the flat?"

"No we don't."

"Have the neighbours said anything?"

"No they haven't."

Two hours later Kingston was still there, now in a driving blizzard. "Any updates, Steve?"

"No."

"A POLICE officer is fatally stabbed during a raid on a suspected terrorist cell at a house in Manchester," reported George Alagiah on the BBC *Ten* on 14 January before going live to Kevin Bocquet.

Sir Trevor McDonald, covering the same story for the ITV *Ten*, had gone live to ITN's Tim Rogers, who was clearly standing right next to Bocquet. Both hacks could clearly be heard in each other's reports, as witnessed by their frantic efforts not to giggle.

Despite the obvious cock-up, both bulletins went back to their reporters for a final update so they could drown each other out a second time.

MEDIA NEWS

"NOW this is hardly a scientific survey," said BBC reporter Kevin Bocquet accurately when he introduced yet another of the pisspoor instant polls with which BBC news is currently obsessed.

Bocquet was in Manchester for BBC News 24 finding out what schoolchildren, students and a hairdresser thought of Saddam ("He's a dictator") and Tony ("Blair is Bush's poodle").

Of course there *can* be no scientific way of delivering such items. The Beeb's own producer guidelines warn that such vox pops "do not even remotely indicate wider opinion". If they weren't so cheap to make, they wouldn't be shown at all.

escape to the country
WHERE THE BBC ENCOURAGES YOU...
TO ESCAPE THE HORROR, GRIME & TATTINESS...
BY GETTING RID OF YOUR TELLY
Ian Pyne

THE troubled Arab satellite television company, Doha-based Al Jazeerah, has been thrown a lifeline by the BBC.

The company, which has been circled by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, has now launched an English language website and established a reciprocal news deal with the Beeb. The station is also establishing an English language news service and intends to start broadcasting from the US.

Not that any of this has reduced the pressure exerted by the US administration on Qatar, the country from which Al Jazeera broadcasts. Washington is hopping mad that the station has repeatedly played host to videos apparently featuring Osama bin Laden breathing fire and damnation to western infidels. There is nothing the US would like more, apart from the downfall of Saddam Hussein, than the downfall of Al Jazeerah.

JUST FANCY THAT!

Ratings are not the only measure of success.
— BBC reaction to news that its £30m digital channel BBC4 is attracting as few as 4,000 viewers.

The 7pm slot is a very difficult one these days and shows have trouble getting a good audience at that time.
— BBC explanation for axing poorly-rated science programme, Tomorrow's World.

Warballs

"A short war could be good for Isa business."
— Mark Dampier, *Money Marketing* magazine.

"Since 9/11, I had to do something drastic – I had to start smoking again."
— New York artist Frank Stella, Radio 3.

The world post-11 September, argued Edelkoort, has resulted in a greater desire among people to cocoon themselves in comfort and this means soft tactile fabrics like satin will be back in demand for interiors products."
— Interior design magazine *idFX*.

"This site is for cat lovers and was started to bring America's cat lovers together after the horrible events on 9/11. If you are a true American cat lover, this is the site for you."
— Blurb for American Cats Co website.

Number crunchings

£10,000,000
■ amount the *Sun* (prop: R. Murdoch) criticised "shameless love rat" James Hewitt for seeking for his Diana letters

£100,000
■ amount Fox (prop: R. Murdoch) is paying James Hewitt as a "war correspondent"

MODERN BRITAIN

TEEN mag *J17* describes itself as "for girls with attitude", giving "sex and snogs" advice to its readership (average age 15) in the manner of "a cool older sister".

Its editor Anna Louise Weatherly is certainly well-practised: consider the following tip from a feature she wrote for *Front* magazine in January 2001: "Cocaine makes my nipples hard but if you rub it on your bits it numbs them totally."

DUMB BRITAIN

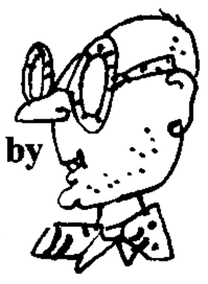
Jazz FM Breakfast Show
Presenter: OK, you say if the following is either alive, dead or Italian food. Giacomo Puccini.
Contestant: Sounds like a type of pasta. Italian food.

The Weakest Link, BBC2
Anne Robinson: Which hot drink is an anagram of the word "eat"?
Contestant: Hot chocolate.

National Lottery Jet Set, BBC1
Eamonn Holmes: Who is the deputy prime minister?
Contestant: William Hague.

Virgin Radio, morning show
Presenter: Where does Dracula come from?
Contestant (*thinks*): Pennsylvania.

AD NAUSEAM



IN YET another survey by an online media agency the prediction is that online advertising will grow by 46 percent in Britain this year, following a huge rise in broadband take-up – itself a product of incessant marketing by BT and others.

All of which is great news for regular internet users mired in pop-up hell. The latest irritant is new work for Hutchinson's 3G mobile phone service, where "2003" appears before whatever you are trying to read, with scant information as to what you're supposed to do about it. A click on any part of the logo leads you to its website, where it eventually transpires that the service doesn't even come into existence until March. Like all pop-ups it has the instant unsolicited aggravation factor of the squeegee-man at the traffic lights.

Pop-up ads, banners and other such interactive media innovations have been banned by many sensible websites who reasoned that the frustration they cause their customers does not merit the revenue they bring in, especially as the so-called click-through rate (those who actually go on to the advertised site) averages only 0.5%.

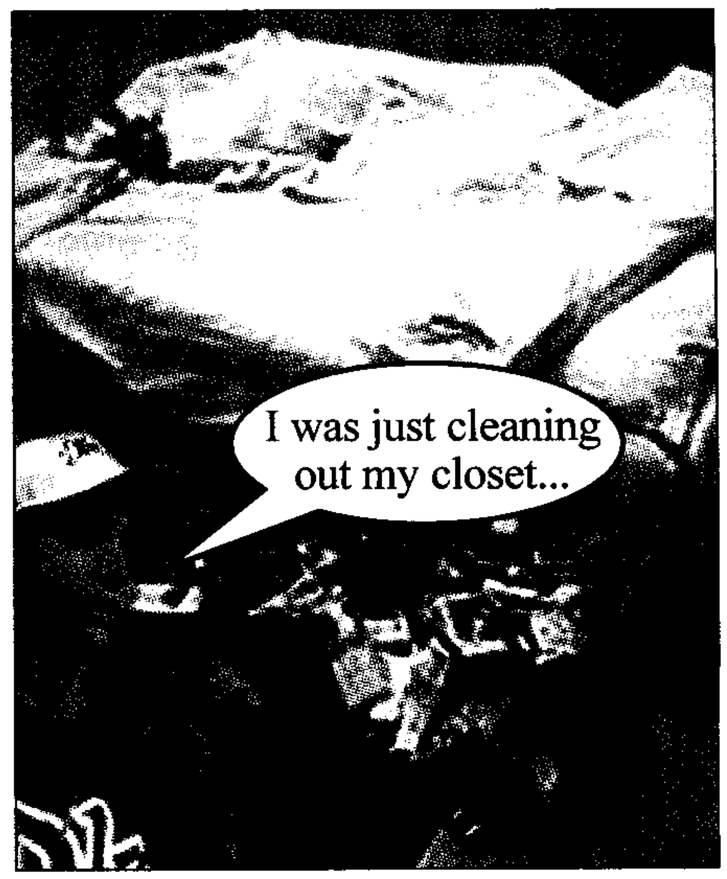
In which case, you may well ask why internet advertisers bother with them at all. A study last year by web consultancy Nielsen Norman suggests the answer is our tender children, who cannot distinguish between site content and advertising.

This is just dandy according to head honcho of 24/7 Real Media David Moore, one of the leading suppliers of pop-ups: "This is no different from what happens on television today. How many kids are exposed to an ad that have no ability to make a purchase or influence any decision at all?" As any parent knows, children certainly do have the ability to influence purchasing decisions – it's called "pester power", a term invented by the marketing men, not the parents.

A MODEST announcement in the trade press a fortnight ago revealed that ad agency

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Tracey Eminem

"Buckets and spades three pound"

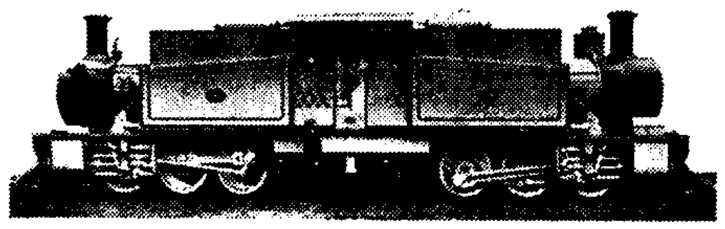
TBWA/London, with *soi disant* creative genius Trevor Beattie resplendent at its helm, has been reappointed to the Labour party advertising account.

Given that Beattie has been a Blairite buddie since the early 90s and following Labour's conspicuous success in the last election, the appointment was a shoo-in, although there was a token pitch. (In which we may presume TBWA was less forthcoming about its work for Frank Dobson's 2000 mayoral campaign). And who, pray tell, oversaw the pitch and was charged with deciding how Labour should be sold to the people for the next election? Step forward disgraced former minister… Peter Mandelson!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

CAMOUFLAGE CHIC IS IN:
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THIS NEW FASHION···
IT SHOULD BE WORN BY THE PEOPLE WHO GO OUT THERE AND FIGHT!!!
LIKE NAOMI!
"GRRR··· BITCH BITCH BITCH!!!"



SIGNAL FAILURES

Focus on Central Pains

NATIONAL Express Group, famous for its dreary coach services, has become an international transport firm by offering to run rail services for bargain subsidies and then demanding more cash once it's entrenched.

NEG's Central Trains was given an extra £45m last spring. Performance then worsened: 29 percent of services were late and more than 2 percent cancelled. As compensation for "poor reliability" in 2000 and 2001, the strategic rail authority (SRA) announced in October a package of "immediate benefits" for Central passengers, such as new train-door controls and painting nine west Midlands stations "not previously scheduled for maintenance". Missing from the list of benefits was withdrawal of supersaver tickets by Central – which immediately raised fares by up to 45 percent for many passengers.

Latest figures show that in the year to October Central was fined £8.9m for poor service – yet the SRA still wants to extend its franchise after its due termination next year.

Central saves cash by not putting staff on buses that replace its trains during engineering work. One Saturday last May, Norma Lightowler, 71, aimed to catch an early train from Uttoxeter to Manchester airport for her flight home to Canada. National rail enquiries (NRES) had confirmed the train would run, but a replacement bus turned up instead. The driver, who wasn't a rail employee, told her to hop on and get a train from Derby – 19 miles in the wrong direction. Time ticked by as the driver tried to work out the route, asking at a shop for directions to one station. There was no connecting train at Derby and staff refused to hire a taxi, so in great distress the pensioner paid £100 for a taxi that reached the airport after check-in had closed.

Mrs Lightowler's nephew asked Central to refund, in Canadian dollars, the taxi and train fares and to compensate Mrs Lightowler for her ordeal. Central replied that the "partnership agreement [with Railtrack] appears to have failed in this case" and "as a measure of goodwill we are willing to award £10 rail travel vouchers". In the ensuing correspondence, Central tried blaming its bus contractor, NRES and Railtrack. Admitting the journey was "horrendous" and "a terrible experience", it sent another £30 in vouchers.

Eight months after her "terrible experience" Mrs Lightowler has been sent one, inaccurate, three-line letter of apology (wrung from Central by her nephew) and £40 of British rail vouchers – which are useless as, fortunately, NEG isn't entrusted with Ontario's trains as well.

All aboard the gravy train

AFTER pledging "I want to see fewer accountants, fewer lawyers and fewer consultants" a year ago, SRA chief Richard Bowker has handed consultants more than 100 commissions.

Since April the SRA has forked out nearly £20m of public cash for advice on various topics, including projects the SRA can't afford. Bowker's decision to renegotiate the failed franchises of his former employer Virgin Rail, rather than open them to rivals, has already generated well over £1.6m of consultancy work.

Bowker is outdone by his number two, Jim Steer, who formerly ran a consultancy called Steer Davies & Gleave. SDG got three SRA contracts, worth almost £200,000. The biggest is for "strategic review of the rail industry". Last year Steer was amassing a huge team of assistants (some on £90,000 a year) which may number 101 by April, but still needed the help of consultants to do his job as, er, managing director of strategic planning.

PS: Jarvis' expert maintenance of the Potters Bar points must have endeared the company to the SRA, which paid it £88,000 for engineering advice last year.

'Dr B. Ching'

DOING THE ROUNDS

ONE of the many "new" Labour buzzwords now heard in the department of health is talk of a patient's "journey" through the NHS. Searching for it on the DoH website gets 618 hits.

The Bristol inquiry concluded that: "Patients in their journey through the healthcare system are entitled to be treated with respect and honesty and to be involved, wherever possible, in decisions about their care." Caroline Richmond's NHS journey, alas, tells a very different story.

It starts in 1992 when Ms Richmond came round after what she thought was a minor operation to discover that her womb and ovaries had been removed without her consent by gynaecologist Ian Fergusson. He found a "swelling in the womb" and used it to justify radical surgery despite the objections of a medical student who knew this was not what Ms Richmond wanted.

Just eight years later, the case reached the GMC, which cleared Fergusson despite finding that the counselling and consent of Ms Richmond "left a lot to be desired", that she had only consented to hysterectomy in the event of her womb being perforated (it hadn't) and that she definitely wanted to keep her ovaries.

These were allegedly removed to protect her from cancer, but alas she developed an unrelated malignancy, non-Hodgkins lymphoma which last year became "high grade" (ie life threatening). She spent much of December in the Middlesex hospital undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, bone marrow biopsy and the draining of 1.2 litres of fluid from her right lung.

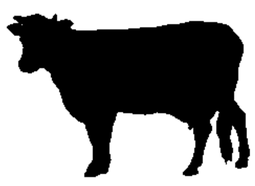
She was transferred to University College hospital for the biopsy and explained that, due to the lung fluid, she would need oxygen when lying flat. The cylinder was empty. It took 35 minutes to find another one, by which time it had gone 5pm and the haematologist decided against doing the biopsy in the absence of support staff. So he arranged for transport to take her back to the Middlesex.

Another 35 minutes later, she was told that transport wasn't answering so she went out on to the street and hailed a taxi. The biopsy was eventually performed and she was discharged with a bagful of medication, with a supplementary prescription for anti-fungal mouthwash and temazepam which she needed for the insomnia brought on by high dose steroids. She felt too unwell to queue for this at the hospital pharmacy. After half an hour trying to get through to her GP at the Good Practice, King's Road, she was told by the receptionist that she could not be given the prescription without being seen. Ms Richmond did not feel a consultation was necessary and in any case was too breathless to come to the surgery. When she reluctantly asked for a home visit, she was told she was six minutes too late.

When Ms Richmond threatened to complain, she was handed over to someone else who then authorised the prescription without her having to see her GP. She felt she remained courteous throughout and was horrified to then receive notification that she'd been removed from the practice list. The letter came shortly after she needed a blood transfusion for her breathlessness, and left her facing four months of chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant without any GP "support". Westminster Primary Care trust has now allocated her a new GP, a Dr Iqbal in the northern tip of SW5. Ms Richmond lives at the bottom of SW3, two bus rides away. It's going to be some journey.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM



A LATE Christmas present from the European court of justice to aspiring dairy farmers has raised hollow laughs after 18 years of injustice.

The court has ruled that milk quota can no longer be owned by people who don't produce any milk – a conclusion which might seem rather obvious to simple folk who don't understand how profitable the milk quota gravy train has been.

To recap, milk quota management in Britain has followed a three stage plan:

1. 1984: Receive quota issued free by European Union (EU) to member states.
2. 1984: Issue free quota to dairy farmers.
3. 1984-2003: Make all incomers pay through the nose to lease or buy quota.

The original intention of the EU that quota should be a publicly-owned asset, available to successive generations, was immediately trashed by MAFF, which wanted to give it to its friends in the industry instead.

Although the new ruling will force all non-milk producers to sell their quota – the price fell 25 percent overnight – it is of course too little, too late. Many of the original quota holders have already shown a clean pair of heels and are enjoying early retirement (having made an average £250,000 in the early years from their free gift) while new or expanding producers in the last 18 years have beggared themselves to lease or buy the right to produce milk.

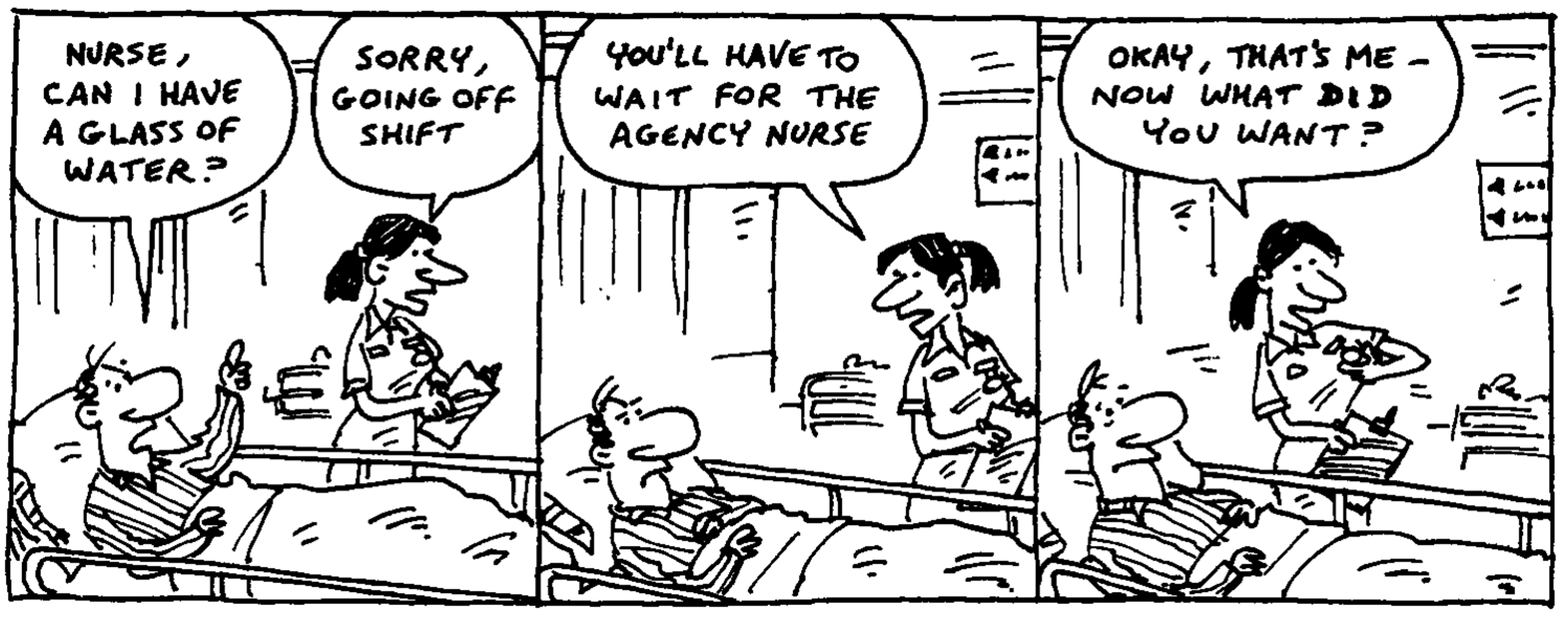
Great, though, is the lamentation from non-producers at this forced sale at a depressed price, and astonishingly some are even crying "unfair"! All is not lost, however, because quota agents are as sly as a sack of weasels and expert at finding the tiniest loopholes. One such is Jonathan Smith of agents BK, who believes that non-producers could magically transform themselves into "producers" through a "contracting arrangement" with a dairy farmer.

And what of suckler cow quota, which Gumboot predicted would rocket in price to "the point of no return" following a clever government trick to further damage beef production? Having opened in June at the usual £200/unit for GB Lowland, trading ceased in December at more than £300, or £115 to lease at which there is no return. But there was none available anyway… so a great success for Defra.

'Gumboot'

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY


NURSE, CAN I HAVE A GLASS OF WATER?
SORRY, GOING OFF SHIFT
YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE AGENCY NURSE
OKAY, THAT'S ME - NOW WHAT DID YOU WANT?

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

DOYLING THE WHEELS

FOLLOWING a violent Saturday lunchtime incident outside a Barnsley pub, police arrested one Peter Doyle, son of Barnsley's mayor, who is also called Peter Doyle.

After questioning, Doyle Jnr was released on bail without charge. Keen to get to Barnsley FC's home match against Mansfield Town that afternoon, he phoned his dad for a lift — despite the Oakwell ground being a mere 10 minutes' walk away. Businessman Doyle senior also happens to be the current owner of struggling second division Barnsley FC, having paid administrators £2.85m in December. So doting Pa Doyle, keen to save his son's shoe leather, sent the mayoral limo – reg no: "THE 1" — to pick him up from the police station.

Spoilsports among Barnsley council taxpayers wonder why they should provide a free taxi service to ferry the mayor's son between a Q&A session with Inspector Knacker and a free seat at the footie, but Doyle Snr says: "I do not consider it was a misuse of the car or abuse of my position to send it for him." The district auditor may disagree.

TYNE BANDITS

EVEN if one agrees with deputy prime minister John Prescott that it is morally quite all right for a British council (such as North Tyneside) to allow a construction company closely linked to Burma's fascist regime (such as Japan's Kajima Corporation) to build schools for it (*Eye* 1071), it might still be prudent to ask if the company is actually any good at building schools.

Kajima's £34m contract to build and run four schools in Whitley Bay and Wallsend is part of a wider thrust into the PFI market in Britain: Kajima is also preferred bidder for a £23m plan to build a "centre for learning" in Northampton and a PFI schools scheme in Ealing. It is in negotiations for a PFI scheme at Haverstock School in Camden and on the shortlist to build a new Health and Safety Executive (HSE) HQ on Merseyside.

But the firm's record in public works elsewhere should give pause to those who are rushing to sign it up. In 1997 Japan's construction minister, Nakajima Kishiro, was sentenced to 18 months in jail and was fined 10m Yen (£54,000) after taking a Y10m bribe from Kajima in return for blocking a criminal investigation into how the firm had won public contracts at inflated rates thanks to fiddled tenders.

North Tyneside councillors claimed to have selected Kajima because of the firms "international schools expertise". But Kajima was behind one of the worst schools development disasters in America, the Belmont Learning Centre in San Francisco. This was the States' most expensive project of its type, a combined school for 4,000 students and community facilities project which Kajima won in 1995. In 2000 it was abandoned, with a half-built school and $250m worth of costs.

Building had to stop after it was discovered that the site, in an area of former oil wells, was badly polluted with poisonous and explosive gases such as hydrogen sulphide and methane. The board had also been over-billed by millions of dollars. Kajima is still being pursued in the US by lawsuits brought by students whose education was disrupted.

No wonder Kajima, cheered on by Prescott, is so keen to develop new "opportunities" in the UK.

● GOOD NEWS for East Riding of Yorkshire council taxpayers: the Rotten Boroughs item in issue 1070 suggesting their council tax was going up by 40 percent was completely untrue. The actual rate was 5.8 percent. Sorry about that. The bad news is that the other part of the story, about chief executive Darryl Stevenson's extraordinary 34.5 percent pay rise, was completely true. Sorry about that, too.

LOAD OF BOLLARDS

MILSOM STREET has been Georgian Bath's premier shopping street for more than 200 years. It features frequently in *Persuasion*, Jane Austen's satire on early 19th century fashionable society.

Austen's imagination, however, could not have come up with a folly more absurd than the modern Bath and North East Somerset (Banes) council's "public realm strategy team" which two years ago decided that the famous street needed a £600,000 "makeover" — or rather an £800,000 one, as the project, in typical Banes style, went way over budget (*Eye* 1030).

Hideous black iron bollards were erected, which began to rust within weeks. Habitat-style benches were installed in front of the Georgian facades. Lines of poetry were carved into expensive paving slabs imported from Italy. Residents and visitors alike protested that it was all unnecessary and ghastly. And now, £800,000 later, a special council committee has belatedly agreed. Milsom Street will go back to the way it was.

NEVER SAY DAI

AT THE end of last year Rotten Boroughs named Flintshire "Council to watch in 2003" (*Eye* 1070). Inspector Dai Knacker evidently agreed, because in the first week of January he announced a fresh investigation into allegations of fraud at the council arising from last year's employment tribunal at which Flintshire's former internal auditor Andy Sutton won his case for constructive dismissal.

Sutton told the tribunal he had repeatedly been denied access to crucial documents by the council's chief executive, Phil McGreevy, and its legal supremo Andrew Loveridge (*Eyes passim*). News of the fresh investigation will have bucked Sutton, whose first attempts to interest Knacker were met with a mysterious warning from former North Wales fraud squad chief Peter Roberts to "beware of the Brotherhood". McGreevy, meanwhile, has promised the inquiry "total cooperation" — a novel exercise for him.

● LEICESTERSHIRE county council's chief executive John Sinnott is to get a 30 percent rise, taking his annual salary to £130,000 (almost a "Darryl", as they would say in East Yorkshire). Six other chief officers will see their pay rise from £80,000 to £100,000. To fund the fat cats' rises, some 1,800 staff will have to accept pay cuts. One care worker facing a £3,000 reduction in her £17,000 salary told the local press: "I feel I am worth nothing." So that's what they mean by "best value".

EDUCASHUN NEWS

TWO YEARS AGO
John Mann was appointed headteacher of the failing Gloucester primary school on south London's infamous North Peckham estate.

His brilliant idea of filling vacant teacher posts by advertising for recruits in Russia and Bulgaria attracted national publicity. He was deluged with more than 600 applications.

One successful candidate, however, was 22-year-old Natalia Vedernikova from St Petersburg. Despite her lack of teaching experience, Mann confirmed her appointment as a teacher to the home office, thus enabling her automatic entry to the UK. He authorised Gloucester primary school to pay Vedernikova £845 up-front so she could buy a plane ticket from St Petersburg to London. Mysteriously, although receiving a teacher's salary, after her appointment last September Vedernikova never set foot inside a classroom. Instead she spent her time acting as Mann's "personal assistant". Unfortunately, so poor are her WP skills that Mann had to rely on a secretary from the town hall pool to look after his correspondence.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that when Mann began his recruitment drive he and his wife were directors of Quality Time Introductions Ltd, a company specialising in the vital educational task of "introducing Russian ladies to English professionals" — a fact that he kept quiet until it was revealed last year by the Unison trade union.

It was not only the gorgeous, pouting Vedernikova who did rather well out of Mann's headship. "Consultants" were also quids in. For example education consultant Roger Cole was employed, according to receipts in possession of the *Eye*, as a consultant architect (£3,500), consultant trainer (£1,560), consultant for curriculum development (£500) and catering consultant (£500). He also received £1,397.60 for supplying the 800-strong school with 4,610 pencils.

At the end of last term, alas, Mann and Vedernikova were both suspended with immediate effect while WS Atkins — the private company which runs Southwark council's schools (*Eyes passim*) — and the LEA investigate allegations of "financial irregularities".

No doubt all will prove to be above board. Meanwhile, further opportunities for ambitious young "Russian ladies" in the English education system must sadly stay on hold.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'VE DRAGGED ME TO A POLE-DANCING CLUB!
SOME OF THESE GIRLS ARE NUDE!!!
NEVER MIND THE GIRLS - CHECK OUT THAT POLE, MAX. IT'S THE ANSWER TO YOUR INTER-FLOOR COMMUNICATION ISSUE!
STAIRS ARE SO OVER!

NOOKS and CORNERS

JUST after Christmas the central pavilion of Brighton's long-derelict West Pier dramatically subsided and threatened to collapse into the sea. Actually, this is not as bad as it might seem: the partial failure of the decayed iron structure had been predicted for some months and does not affect the plans to rebuild one of Britain's most interesting as well as elegant seaside piers.

Needless to say the occasion was used by our architectural profession to rubbish those who have fought to preserve this much-loved structure in favour of creating an exciting, forward-looking, cutting-edge, etc, modern replacement designed by one of themselves.

"Given the collapse," opined the president-elect of the RIBA, George Ferguson, "we should question the ethics of simply replicating the old building." In fact the restoration of the West Pier is to be achieved by the building of a thoughtful, acceptable modern development at the landward end; but architects are seldom interested in what people want, only with what they ought to like.

There was a similar response to a much worse event: the terrible fire in the heart of Edinburgh New Town which destroyed a rich, complex mixture of old buildings in Cowgate beneath the South Bridge. These were largely ordinary buildings but ones which contributed greatly to the romantic character of the city all on different levels. Almost immediately, posturing local modern architects like Richard Murphy said it would be wrong to repair the damaged structures spared by the department of building control, and even more wicked to recreate ancient structures destroyed in the conflagration. What Edinburgh must have, he and others yelled, are new, exciting, forward-looking, etc, buildings instead – never understanding that urban life flourishes in patterns of buildings that have evolved over time and which permit that factor essential for diversity: low rents.

Only the Edinburgh architect Malcolm Fraser seems to understand this, writing that "Calls for the reinstatement (with a modern twist) or an international architectural competition to get 'world-class architecture' – God save us from a city composed entirely of architects showing off – demonstrate an obsession with stone and glass monuments at the expense of life and vitality." Couldn't put it better myself.

MY PICTURE shows the west front of Llandaff Cathedral as it looked more than a century ago with the newly restored medieval pile rising from its unusual sunken site immediately below a steeply sloping path. Readers will recall the gratuitous plan to rearrange the access to the west door (moving the ancient paths and grave monuments once painted by J.M.W. Turner) ostensibly to achieve disabled access.

The matter went to consistory court, at which deans and dignitaries expressed outrage that outsiders like the Victorian Society should presume to tell them how to look after their cathedral, especially when using rational arguments which had been aired in this organ (Eye 978). Needless to say, the chancellor, Michael Evans QC, blithely ignored the expert advice of Llandaff's own diocesan advisory committee and pronounced in favour of meddling with the old paths, steps and walls.

Although building work has started to make the setting of the cathedral as utilitarian and banal as possible, local opponents have not given up. This is cheering as it now emerges that not only have the architects, Acanthus Clews of Banbury, had to revise their planned new levels and steps because the original design — that for which a faculty was obtained — doesn't work, but that the poor disabled are not in fact now being catered for.

Wheelchair access to Llandaff Cathedral will continue to be through the present entrance into the south aisle or by a new route round to the north aisle from the Prebendal House and the Processional Way — which is precisely what opponents of digging up the ground outside the west end recommended.

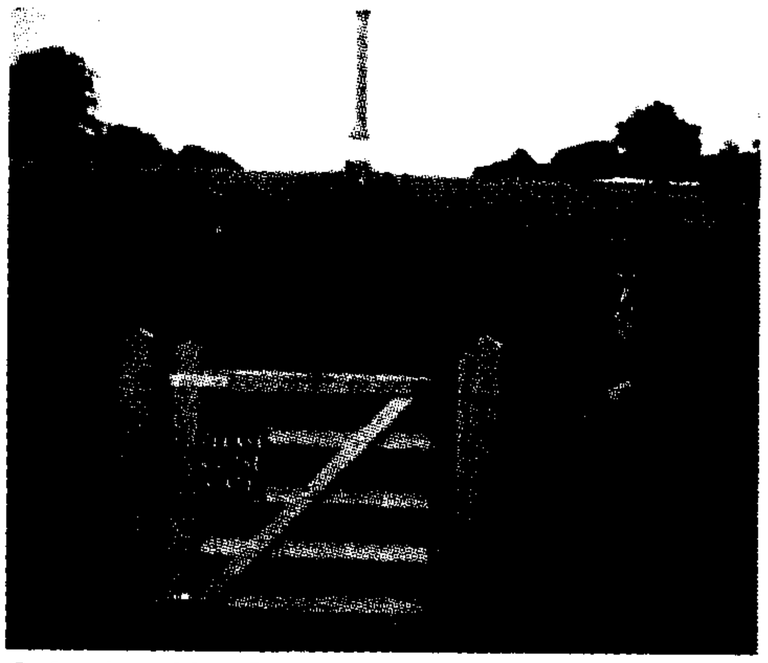
All this brings the "ecclesiastical exemption" – that dubious and much abused autonomy which allows pompous lawyers to pronounce on the fate of historic buildings which belong to all of us – into question. And not just that: listed building consent is required – but has not been obtained – for making a new hole in the perimeter wall and replacing the picturesque stone path which leads down to the west end from the lychgate. So it is still not too late to stop this gratuitous barbarism.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

Great idea of the Guardian's, having cutting-edge artists design their cover!
Shame Gillian's brilliant irony went over the reader's heads.
G2
FUCK CILLA BLACK
Well, I warned her not to be so subtle...
G2
FUCK

I-SPY *Blenheim Palace*



Submitted by Glyn Berrington. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs.)*

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

LAST weekend at the Barbican the BBC organised a high-profile festival devoted to Mark-Anthony Turnage: the now-ageing bovver-boy of British music whose compositions fashionably document a world of urban desolation and back street-cred with titles like *Drowned Out, A Quick Blast, Scorched.*

The Barbican event began on Friday with *Blood on the Floor*. And not inappropriately since Turnage has just turned Mr Angry with his publishers and taken a hatchet to his long-standing relationship with them.

For 20 years his career has been nurtured by Schotts; in particular by the firm's London director Sally Groves, who single-handedly steered the belligerent and moody Turnage from obscurity to stardom. It was Groves who fixed the Barbican weekend. And her reward? Turnage walks out on her and signs with rival publisher Boosey & Hawkes in expectation that Booseys will drive a harder bargain for commission fees and earn him more money.

Turnage might reflect on the message of his own, politically aggressive, anti-Thatcher opera *Greek*: that modern Britain is a place of shattered values, ruled by greed.

● THERE'S been a slightly bloody floor at the Musician's Union, too, over the past few days since it became apparent that assistant general secretary Bob Wearn has been striking private deals in contravention of the MU's public policy.

Wearn's job carries responsibility for promoting the cause of live (as opposed to pre-recorded) music in theatre performances; and he's been conspicuously vocal on that subject – not least in last month's *Classical Music* magazine where he stressed that "the MU is concerned not only with protecting employment opportunities for our members but also with the impact recorded music has on the future of musical production".

How interesting, then, to discover that Mr Wearn and several other members of the MU executive board have struck a quiet agreement with the choreographer Matthew Bourne for his production of *Nutcracker* – currently at Sadler's Wells – to tour the UK with no orchestra. Simply a tape.

Details of the agreement emerged at an extremely angry MU meeting hastily convened the other week at the Royal Opera House, in the course of which Wearn was observed to have "collapsed in a faint" under the pressure of intensive questioning. In his defence it was said that *Nutcracker* would be playing in theatres too small to accommodate an orchestra. But many of these theatres are regular venues for Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Ballet on tour. If *their* orchestras fit, why shouldn't the *Nutcracker* band?

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

THE strange case of Bjørn Lomborg grows ever stranger. Professor Lomborg, a Danish statistician, caused an international furore in 2001 when his book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, poured scorn on many of the tenets of the green movement. Lomborg asserted – and still does – that much of what passes for environmentalism is little more than a modern religion, relying on faith rather than facts.

Specifically, he believes that many of the claims by the green movement are simply wrong; species are not disappearing at the rate quoted by environmentalists; the world's air is getting cleaner not dirtier; deforestation is not quite as severe as is usually stated; and so on. To back up his arguments he used an impressive array of statistics culled from numerous sources.

His most contentious claim is that we should not bankrupt ourselves tackling global warming. Lomborg does not (contrary to what nearly every newspaper has reported) believe that global warming isn't happening; instead he says that "the colossal sums it is planned to spend on global warming is money ill-spent". He argues that the trillions of dollars that it would cost to implement the Kyoto treaty in full will only reduce global warming by a trivial amount. Far better, he says, to spend this money on improving the lot of the third world – clean water, sanitation and so on; and on mitigating the effects of global warming – building sea defences, relocating people where necessary.

The magazine *Scientific American* duly attacked Lomborg in print, commissioning a team of handpicked green-leaning scientists to rubbish his claims. Now, Lomborg has been given a formal rebuke by a panel of eminent scientists known as the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty (DCSD).

You would assume that to come to its conclusion of "scientific dishonesty" the DCSD conducted a thorough review of Lomborg's work, reassessing his data and checking his sources. Except, er, it didn't. Freely admitting, in so many words, that it couldn't be bothered to do this, it simply reprinted extracts from the original *Scientific American* articles criticising Lomborg. In one breathtaking sentence, the DCSD states: "[We] however have reached the conclusion that new experts would scarcely be able to add new dimensions to the case."

The ruling was reported with some glee in the press. "Debunker of global warming found guilty of scientific dishonesty," crowed the *Guardian*. This (inaccurate) headline – see above re Lomborg's position on climate change – came above a story in which not one mention was made of the fact that the DCSD's verdict was based on no new evidence or research.

The latest instalment in the saga sees the DCSD appearing to backtrack, issuing a statement to "correct a recurring and grave misunderstanding" that has occurred in the media. It then weasels that it never intended to discuss the science of Lomborg's arguments – ignoring the fact that that is precisely what it has been doing.

'Boffin'

"Bloody Christians!"

Letters

Private Eye

Tubular balls-up

Sir,

I'm afraid your number crunching [on the London Underground PPP, 1070] is already out of date. Indeed, the government hopes to attract £500m initial investment through the PPP but the cost of the scheme is now £500m as Alistair Darling admitted to the Commons transport committee just before Xmas and not the £400m you quote, which was the figure that was first revealed by my book, Down the Tube, completed in the summer. As there is some way to go until the PPP deal is signed, the eventual cost of the PPP will clearly be much greater than the private investment it attracts. But Mr Darling assured the committee that the PPP represents value for money to the British public.

Yours,
CHRISTIAN WOLMAR,

Author, Down the Tube.

Lookalike

Grinch

Jade

Sir,

"Look at me," says the grinch, "I look just like a big brother housemate."

Regards,
J. WEST,

Via e-mail.

Girls on top

Sir,

Your description of Labour's policy on all-women shortlists is the precise opposite of the truth. Candidates will be chosen from all-women shortlists in half the seats where sitting MPs have already announced their retirement, but in ALL the seats where they retire between now and the election. So hanging on in hopes of a peerage may allow Blairistas last-minute opportunities, but they will all be favourite daughters, not favourite sons.

Yours etc,
ANN BLACK,

Member, Labour Party National Executive Committee.

LUVVIES

Articulate and passionate about her work, [Beatrice] Dalle maintains that she rarely reads a script before accepting a role. "I take the part on trust for the director," she says, "and I act on instinct. I don't try to create a performance or anything of that nature. I just give my soul, and that's it, that's accepted, that's fine."

The Times

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Scenes You Seldom See

"No point asking me to taste it – I don't know the first thing about wine"

Job well done

Sir,

Re: Scenes You Seldom See, 1071. The building firm I used to work for usually completed on time and, if not below budget, at least to budget. Then we had to wait a year to get paid! "Scenes You Never Hear About."

IAN JOHNSON,

Via email.

Car admissions

Sir,

Your article on the environmental costs of fuels – and the need to reduce energy consumption whatever fuel is used (Eye 1071) – was excellent.

Turning to the back page, I saw a whole page advertisement for Saab saloon cars. Of course, one of the main energy costs where the car industry is concerned is in actually making the car in the first place.

Shurely shome mishtake?

Yours faithfully,
TOBY GREEN,

Green Party District Councillor (Stroud District).

Bio-feedback

Sir,

While it is certainly true that the fossil fuel companies have tried to run down biofuels by calculating the energy needed for the tractors, fertilizers, etc, it is also possible to run the machinery itself on biofuels, and to grow rape organically with reasonable yields. This would be a green fuel even by your standards, surely.

Yours sincerely,
JAMES PAGE MIEE,

London SW14.

Lookalike

Dim

Hewitt

Sir,

I have noticed an uncanny resemblance between James Hewitt, as he recently appeared on the Larry King show, and Harry Enfield's "Tim Nice But Dim" character.

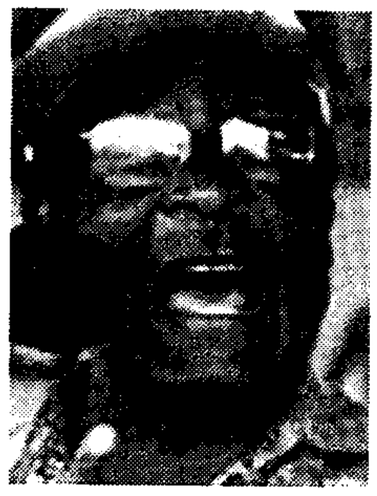
Are they by any chance related?

E. HARMAN,

High Wycombe, Bucks.

Lookalike

Mugabe



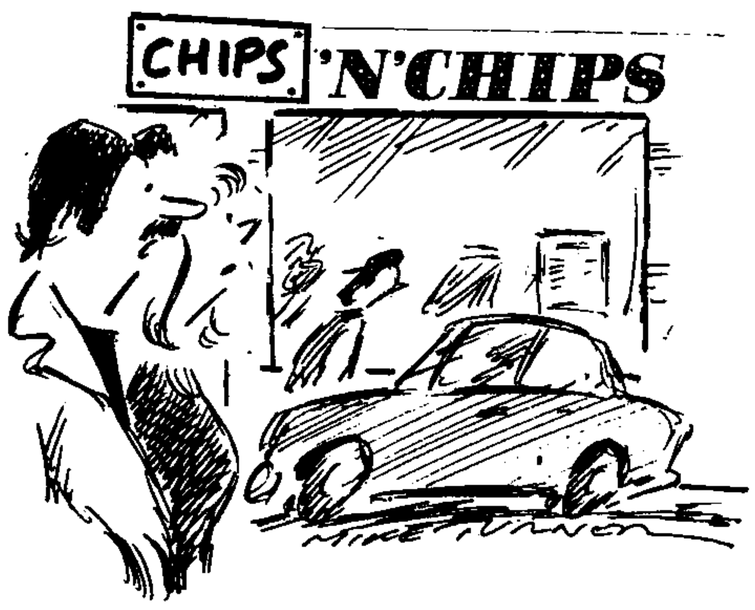
Tamarind Seed

Sir,

The uplifting picture of Our Lord revealed in a peanut, published in your last edition, bought to mind that 1974 "lost classic" of the cinema, The Tamarind Seed, starring Omar Sharif and Julie Andrews. The eponymous seed was supposed to bear the likeness of an unfortunate black man who, so the legend goes, was hanged from the branches of its progenitor. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when munching upon a Tamarind the other day, to discover the enclosed. By any chance, could this miraculous fruit have been foretelling the imminent demise of any well-known statesman? I think he should be told.

Yours faithfully,
STEVEN HAINES,

Via e-mail.



"Now do you believe the fishing industry's in crisis?"

Space filler

Sir,

In a combined display of pedantry and nerdishness, I must inform you that Heath's cartoon from Eye 1071 incorrectly uses the term "light year" as a measure of duration. It is, in fact, a measure of distance. I shall not even mention the split infinitive.

Yours,
JAMES BARLOW,

Bristol, UK.

Healthy scepticism

Sir,

Are you lot trying to pursue some covert conservative agenda with us long-suffering readers? Within two unrelated sections of Eye 1071 I noted the same subliminal message.

Within Doing The Rounds, you passed on the whinge of an anonymous (well, there's a surprise) obstetrician from Cardiff who claimed that a spurious complaint had been made against him and that this spoke "volumes about vexatious patients seeking a pay off with public money".

Then, within Letters, a Dr Ed Walker, with highly elusive wit, stated that the one benefit of him having to fill in for non-existent porters at his hospital was the fact that he might "put his back out and get a big fat settlement from his employers."

Just who is in charge at editorial with Eye these days? Norman Tebbit? One allegedly non-substantial complaint and the fact that low paid workers seek recompense for lifting-related injury does not a health compensation culture make.

Come on Eye – if you want to portray health workers who get paid in small change, and patients in general, all as a bunch of opportunistic free-loaders, at least have the balls to come right out and say so.

Yours (mercifully) healthily,
ARCHIE BEATON,

Inverness.

Her cup runneth over...

Sir,

I was outraged by the untruthfulness of last week's item about my breasts (1071). How dare you. I am a J cup, not a G cup as you so recklessly report.

I trust that you wouldn't like me to go round telling everyone your knob is 6cm shorter than it actually is. I suggest your correspondent squeezes more accurately in future.

Yours faithfully,
BELLA MANSFIELD,

Via email.

Frank exchange

Sir,

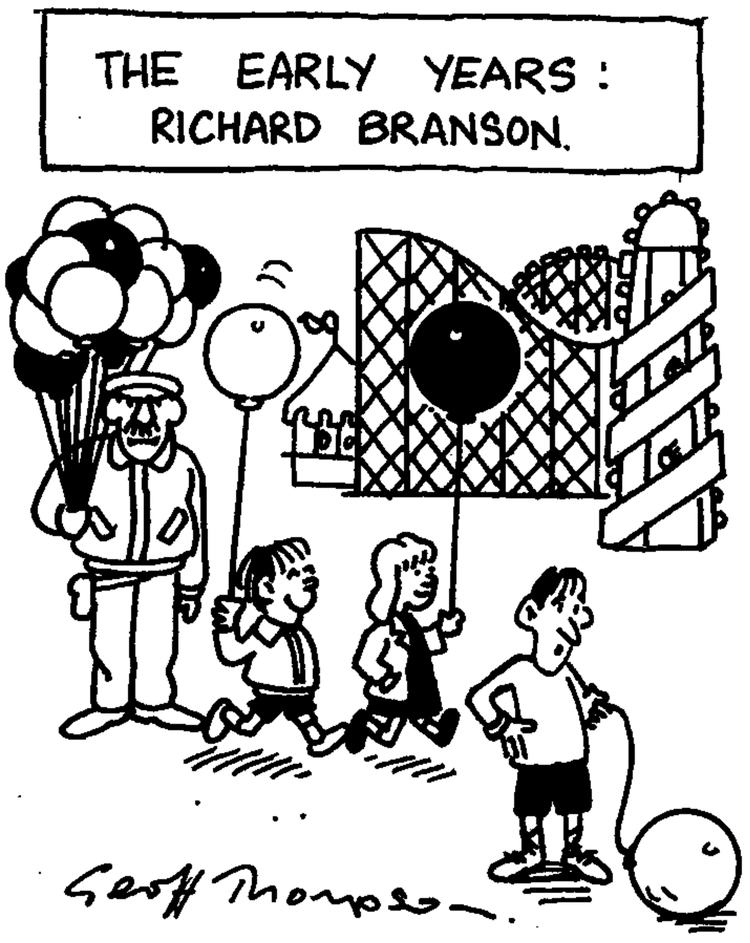
As a former journalist I know how important it is not to let the facts get in the way of a good story.

The timing of your piece about how things at RDF Media "are not working out as well as some investors had hoped" (1071) is impeccable. We're shortly to announce annual results showing sales up some 40 percent and profits up some 70 percent. I think I can just about handle the pressure.

One of our shows you mention, Hotter Sex, which we produced for Sky One, includes advice about how to breath new life into a flagging organ. Would you like me to send you a copy?

Yours sincerely,
DAVID FRANK,

Chief Executive RDF Media Group.



McNews flash

Sir,

I would like to know how you can justify the comment that Newsnight Scotland is "ignored by most Scots who would rather watch stuff from London like everyone else".

I question this statement because there was an article in a copy of the Scotsman newspaper last year which revealed that Newsnight Scotland's audience share is higher than that for (London) Newsnight. This appears to contradict your comment ridiculing regional output.

Having said this, the important thing for all politics coverage, wherever it is from, is the quality of political debate that fills it. Hopefully your (otherwise) fine organ will continue to scrutinise them and ensure that it is as high as possible!

Yours,
JAMES MORRISON,

Via email.

FBL, which carried out the £170,000 refit of the prestigious coporate hostility suite at cost price, has shared premises in recent years with 4site in Jordangate.

Macclesfield Express

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"He [Gerard Houlier] runs a very tightly knit ship."
ROB HAWTHORNE, Sky Sports
(Danny McConnell)

"So, Trevor Brooking – 3-2 to Wolves. Where does the balance of this game lie now?"
JOHN MURRAY, Radio 5 Live
(R.E. Perks)

"If you can get through the first round you have a good chance of getting into the next one."
NIGEL WORTHINGTON, BBC Radio Norfolk
(John Sewell)

"He has broken his left leg, which is a real kick in the teeth for him."
LUKE HARVEY, Radio 5 Live
(Colin McNicoll)

"In the space of three second-half minutes Newcastle scored twice at the end of the first half."
JOHN MURRAY, Radio 5 Live
(Alex Wolstenholme)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS.
I SEE, AND YOU LISTEN...
NO, IF I LISTEN IT COSTS MORE.
COUNSELLING SERVICE
DELUXE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Letter from **Damascus**
from Our Own Correspondent

EVERY day on TV we see clips of Bashar, our 37-year-old president whose image is almost as pervasive as that of his late father, Hafez, shaking hands with world leaders from Jacques Chirac to Tony Blair. This shows that Syria is a force to be reckoned with, and leaves you imperialist British and Americans in no doubt that we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Arab brothers in Palestine and Iraq.

Some abroad were surprised, then, that we voted for the US-sponsored resolution 1441 at the United Nations, sending weapons inspectors back to Iraq. But we are used to such inconsistency. Not that we'd say so out loud while still in Syria.

Ibrahim Hamidi, the Jaguar-driving correspondent of the London-based *Hayat* newspaper, thought it was a good idea to investigate Syria's preparations for the refugees sure to arrive when US bombs start raining down on Iraq. The security services summoned Mr Hamidi to remind him that such US attacks can be thwarted by Arab solidarity and spent a couple of weeks questioning him to make sure he got the point.

A couple of leading Syrian Kurds have been hauled in too, just to make sure our Kurdish brothers – there are more than a million of them here – don't think autonomy for Iraqi Kurds means autonomy for them too. Why would they want more rights anyway? Syria is well known for the excellent relations between its religious and ethnic groups, and for having a secular regime where anyone can rise to the top.

True it helps if – like most senior members of the government, ruling Ba'ath party and (especially) the army – you happen to be an Alawite. Westerners may struggle to understand the Middle East, but everyone in Syria knows who's an Alawi (10 percent of the population), who's Christian (another 10 percent) and who's Sunni Muslim (nearly 80 percent).

The Alawites are strange. They claim to be an offshoot of Shia Islam but practise their own religion in secret. The most famous Alawites are the Assads, and much of the rule of father and son has been designed to keep them and their kinsmen in the driving seat, taking most of the plum jobs and import contracts.

The Sunni Muslims are understandably resentful. But when in 1982 a group of militant Sunnis – the Muslim Brothers – revolted in Hama, Hafez had the artillery fire shells into its densely populated old quarter, killing 20,000.

No wonder there is no love lost between the government and militant Sunni groups like Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, which would like to see fundamentalist Islamic rule in Damascus.

Bashar has no love either for Saddam Hussein, another Sunni (albeit not a pious one) and his father's old rival as self-styled defender of the Arabs. But business is business, and Saddam has for the past two years been sending us 200,000 barrels a day of cheap oil, a welcome annual subsidy of $1bn to our creaking, Soviet-style economy. So while Bashar is happy to help George Bush against al Qaeda, he's not too happy about him overthrowing Saddam and dividing Iraq's liquid gold between American oil companies and those – like Russia and Turkey – whose support the US is buying for the coming war.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is another tricky issue. It's perfectly obvious in Damascus that Israel returning the Golan Heights to Syria is more important than Arafat's long-running attempt to carve out a small piece of territory on which to fly a flag. But it's good PR – and leverage – for us with our brother Arabs to allow Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Popular Front to operate from Damascus.

The US seems to understand all this, which is why it – and its allies in London – can have good relations with a Syrian government still listed by the US as one of the seven state sponsors of terrorism. As one Bush official recently said: "The Syrians are highly opportunistic – which is why we can work with them."

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "Mooning is a constitutional right, and a part of the larrikin Australian character," James Albert Ernest Togo told Coolangatta Magistrates Court (Queensland), as he pleaded not guilty to a charge of indecent behaviour. "The larrikin moon is of a political nature, when it is directed at an authority figure, and it should therefore be recognized as a legitimate form of communication under the Constitution."

But police prosecutor Senior Sergeant Michael Purcell claimed that Togo's defence was a dangerous one. "How can the action of someone dropping their pants and exposing their buttocks become public comment or a political protest?" he asked. "If we allow everyone who wants to drop their kecks and moon police officers to do so, we are undermining the authority and solemnity of the police."

Speaking on Togo's behalf, Eugene O'Sullivan (a lawyer from the Aborigine legal service) argued that "mooning a police car is a legitimate and legal means of expression. It is a mild political statement, and a protest against government, and as such is protected under the implied freedoms of the Constitution. And surely those freedoms should override the outdated Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act?"

Magistrate Sheryl Cornack adjourned the case, to allow time for the federal and state attorneys-general to consider a response. The verdict is expected in February. *(The Age [Australia], 30/11/02 and BBC News, 13/12/02. Spotter: Clive Jones)*

—●—

● *"In all my years as a public prosecutor, I have never come across such a disgraceful confidence trick," Eugene Tan told a court in Singapore. "Instead of finding gainful employment, the accused feeds off and preys upon unsuspecting victims, some of whom he knows are already in financial difficulties. His method was ingenious, and he is a good actor. But he is also a disgracefully debased cheat, and I demand a severe sentence."*

Earlier, Tan had told the court how Chew Tuck Kok had worked his deception. "He claimed that he was a high-ranking government officer, and told people that he could help them to obtain official licences and permits, if they paid him a commission. In one typical case, he made S$100,000 from a promise to help someone obtain a betting-outlet licence. In order to convince people of his importance, he went to Madame Tussauds, and had photographs taken of himself standing alongside waxworks of famous people, while pretending to talk to them. Then he showed the pictures to prospective clients, as proof of the elevated circles in which he moved, and of his influential friends.

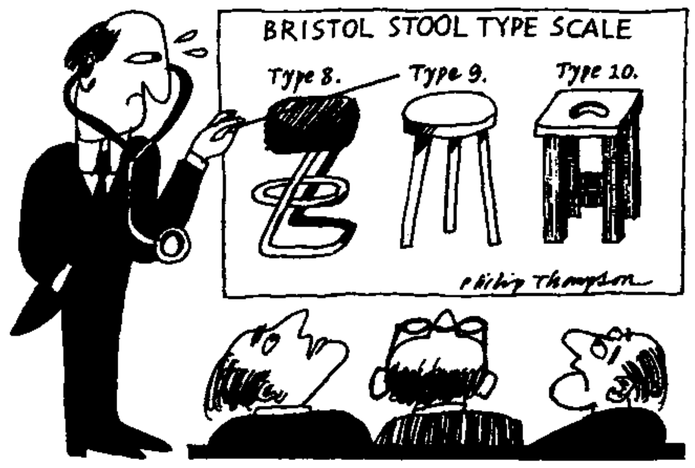
"I've seen these photographs, and the ones of him standing next to Lee Kuan Yew and Bill Clinton are quite convincing. The one of him with Boris Yeltsin is less believable though, because the waxwork doesn't look real. Mind you, Yeltsin has looked like a waxwork for years, so it was an easy mistake to make."

Kok was sentenced to six years in jail. (The Bangkok Post, 13/10/02. Spotter: David Pinto-Duschinsky)

—●—

● Stools have been classified into seven types, on what is called the Bristol Stool Form Scale, according to their appearance as seen in the toilet water, after a motion.
Type 1 separate hard lumps, like nuts.
Type 2 sausage-like, but lumpy.
Type 3 like a sausage but with cracks in the surface.
Type 4 like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft.
Type 5 soft blobs with clear-cut edges.
Type 6 fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool.
Type 7 watery, no solid pieces.

Stools at the lumpy end of the scale are hard to pass and often require a lot of straining. Stools



at the loose or liquid end of the spectrum can be too easy to pass – the need to pass them is urgent and accidents can happen. The ideal stools are types 3 and 4, especially type 4, as they are most likely to glide out without any fuss whatsoever. Also, they are least likely to leave you with an annoying feeling that something is left behind.

The Ideal Bowel Movement:
The feeling you need to go is definite but not irresistible.
Once you sit down there is no delay.
No conscious effort or straining is needed.
The stool glides out smoothly and comfortably.
Afterwards there is only a pleasant feeling of relief.

All this is most likely if the stool is type 4. *(Family Doctor: Understanding Your Bowels [BMA]. Spotter: Anon)*

apparently — BY MIKE BARFIELD

WORDSEARCH THROUGH THE AGES

① IN THE BEGINNING

G O D
O O G
D O D

② STONE AGE

U G U
G U G
U G U

③ ANCIENT EGYPT

④ ANGLO-SAXON

K C U F
C N O B
O U A L
C T S W

⑤ VICTORIAN

S I N
I I S
N S N

⑥ MODERN DAY (See ④)

K C U F
C N O B
O U A L
C T S W

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo,

And I don't mind telling you that I've been getting pretty hot under my dog collar this week!

Not, of course, that any of you have ever seen me in anything so stuffy and fuddy-duddy as a dog collar! My taste runs more to plum velveteen Nehru suits, as any of you who were at Evensong this week would realise. But you know what I mean!

Let's just say that I've had it up to here with all those people in the parish who've been going round complaining that there's been no debate about our great crusade to rid the world of Satan.

Look, we've had the debate. And I won it!

And if you want proof of that, just speak to Mr Mandelson, our former church warden, who I am sure everyone would agree is completely impartial.

He described my speech at the parish meeting as a "bravura performance by the most brilliant vicar this parish has ever had".

I am glad to say that we're going to be seeing a lot more of Peter around the vicarage in the coming months, especially now that Mr Campbell is ~*{}pdf139 *(I'm afraid the computer seems to have chewed up this passage of the Vicar's newsletter. Sorry! A. Campbell, Editor.)*

What I said at the meeting, for those who failed to attend, was the following:

A. Satan is evil.

B. Rev. Dubya is good.

C. We should be on the side of good rather than evil.

D. Therefore, we must be against Satan.

The logic is inescapable!

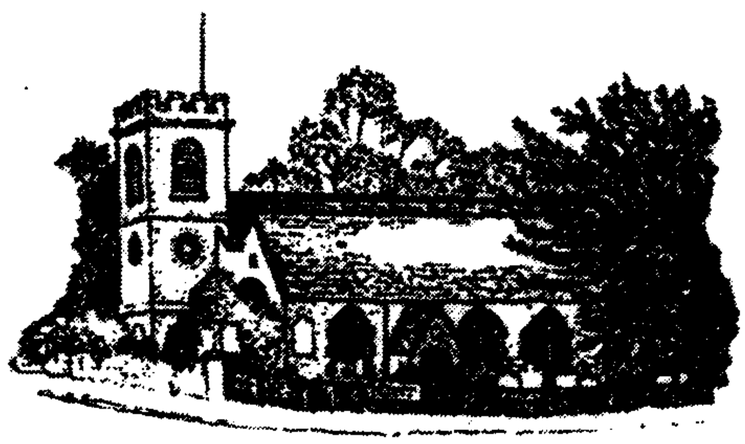
I ended up my speech by saying that if we didn't act now to rid the world of Satan, generations yet unborn would never forgive us.

Particularly not, as they would not be alive anyway, since the whole world would have been turned into a lifeless desert by the deadly weapons of mass-destruction unleashed by the great Satan from his Babylonian lair.

As it says in the Book of Resolutions, "Behold, a great cloud shall come from the East and its name shall be Ric-in, which is to say 'the spawn of the devil'" (Chapter 14, v.41).

Mr Mandelson told me afterwards that this bit of my speech was so frightening that he nearly fainted!

I don't know what people have got against Peter. But I have to say, we could use someone of his talents round here, rather than having to rely on *~//{}+ibs+ *(More computer trouble, I'm afraid! A.C.)*



After my speech, we all sang a new hymn, which I'd written specially for the occasion, and which we will be singing at Evensong until further notice:

"Fight the good fight, with all thy might,
You are wrong and I am right."

Words and music Rev. T. Blair.

Yours, more in anger than in sorrow,

Tony

To Remember In Your Prayers

● Mrs Short, who continues to have problems with her conscience, parading it all over the parish as if she's the only person who's ever worried about anything. Let us pray that she may seek guidance from above (ie, me) about her forthcoming decision to resign from the PCC as soon as possible, and in the meantime may she be given the strength to remain silent at all times. T.B.

Advertisement

HANDY MANDY

Now offering a complete pest control service!

Have you got a Brown rat somewhere next door that you want to get rid of? I'm your man. Ring me and I guarantee to poison everyone against the rat.

Rattus Gordonicus Brunus

Remember my motto: "I'm a fighter, not a quitter"

Parish Postbag

Dear Sir,

I have been asked by the Vicar to write a letter of support for his crusade alongside the Rev. Dubya of the Church of Latter-Day Morons. Much as I would like to assist Tony in his difficult, not to say ill-advised venture, I unfortunately have not got sufficient time to write such a letter, due to the many additional tasks I have had to take on as a result of the Vicar swanning around the world in his ridiculous plum-coloured

Yours prudently,
Gordon Brown,
11, Vicarage Road.

The Editor reserves the right to cut all letters on the grounds of space. A.C.

●SOS●

Knit A Gun For Our Lads!

Mrs Hoon is appealing to all ladies of the parish to rally round to help equip our boys (and girls! Thanks for that, Cherie!) as they head off to the Middle East to take on the Evil One. She says we need socks, scarves, boots, guns, ammunition, tanks and aircraft carriers. So any help would be gratefully appreciated! Please contact Mrs Hoon asap at The Bunker (formerly the crypt).

Marathon Man

Good to see someone in the parish is running something properly! Perhaps he is the only one who will go the full distance! Anyone who wishes to sponsor Mr Campbell on his marathon and help raise money for SPIN (The Society for Practitioners of News management), please send completed forms with cheques to Fiona Miller, Dunspinnin', The High Street. Says Alastair, "I'm a sprinter, not a poofter" *(no offence, Peter!).* A.C.

IRAQ: INSPECTORS MAKE SENSATIONAL DISCOVERY

by Our Man In Baghdad **SARAH SANDS**

THE UNITED Nations weapons inspectors today reported "an incredible find" that makes war inevitable.

Smoking Barrel

The discovery of a huge quantity of oil buried deep under the desert is sure to prompt military intervention.

Washington hawks were jubilant at the find. Said General H.J. Kickassburger, "Saddam thought he could hide it. But now we know he is sitting on vast stockpiles of WMD (Wells of Major Dimensions). Now we can send in the tankers."

'KEEP POLITICS OUT OF MONEY' Cricketers' Plea

by Our Sports Staff **M.C.C. Bore**

THE ECB (English Cricket Board) last night angrily told the government to keep "politics out of money".

"We have a long tradition in this country," said a spokesman, "of making money for its own sake – some of these cricketers have been preparing for this opportunity to make money for years and for them it is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to show their money-making skills on the international stage."

Said Captain Yassir Wirgoin, "Of course we are aware of the problems in Sierra Leone, but other areas of business are allowed to make money, so why not us?"

Run Out Of The Country

He then continued, "We have been unfairly victimised for political reasons. If we do go to Antigua, we will not, of course, shake hands with Saddam Hussein. Our aim will be simply to get on with the game and make some hundreds if not thousands."

Late Score

England £785,000 all out.
Zimbabwe 12 dead.

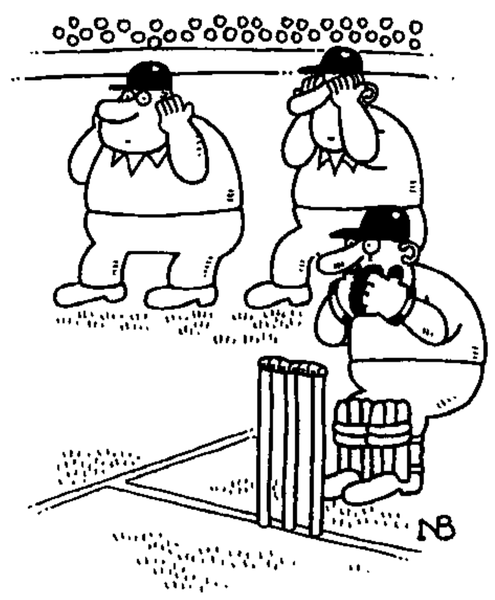
Thought for the Day

with **Christina Odone**

Christina: You know, I wonder how many of us come back from the doctors and discover we're up the duff? And then isn't our first thought I'd better get married? I know it is with me. It may be an old fashioned view in today's
(cont'd. p. 94)

© Christina Odoneitatlast.

TOMORROW: Father Peder Foil, parish priest of St Lolita's-on-the-Net



Yes! It's The Possible Marital Break-Up Of The Century!!

Zoe Ball

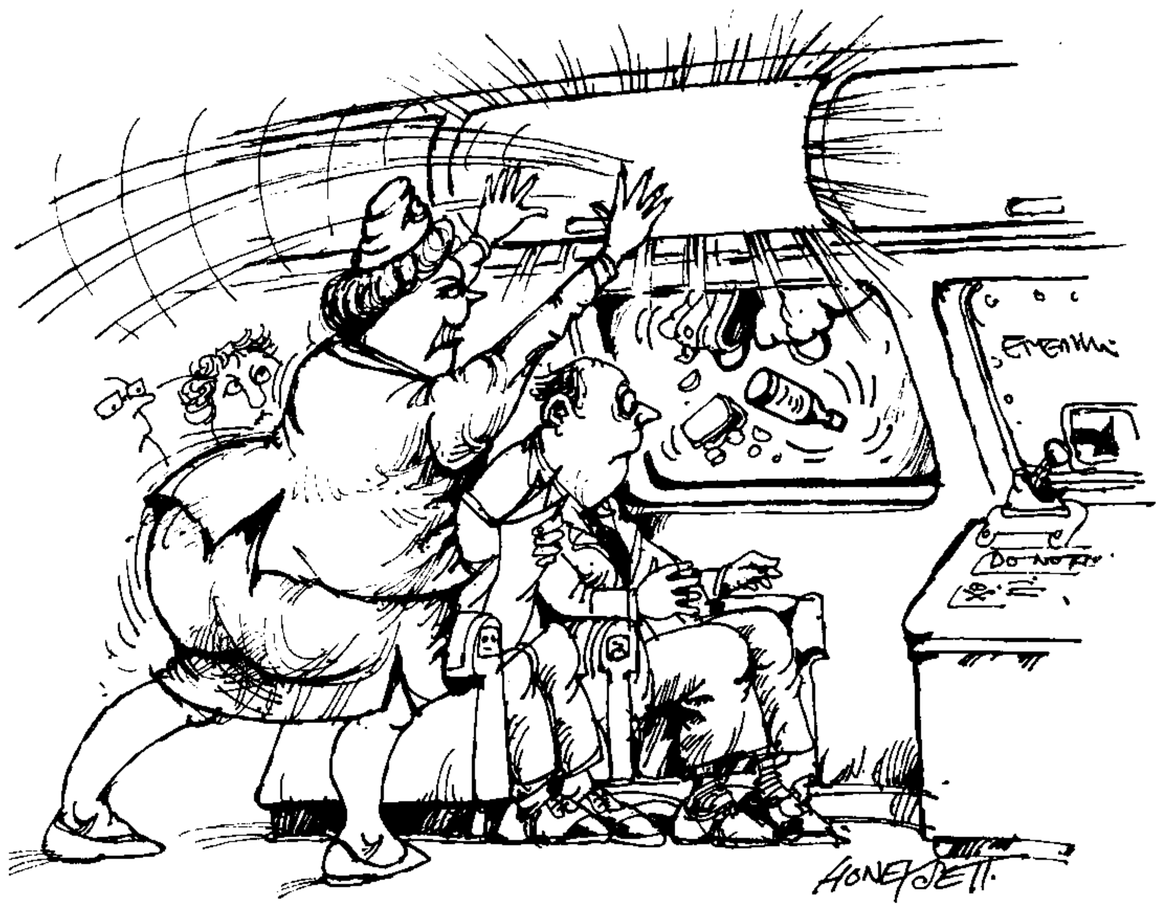
How They Are Still Related

(at time of going to press)

Fatboy Slim

Lucille Ball
|
Terry Major-Ball
|
Alan Ball
|
Zoe Wannamaker
|
Zoe Heller
|
Ed Balls
|
Zola Budd

Field Marshal Slim
|
Fats Domino
|
Boy George
|
George Melly
|
Fats Waller
|
Fats Soames
|
Fat Roy Jenkins

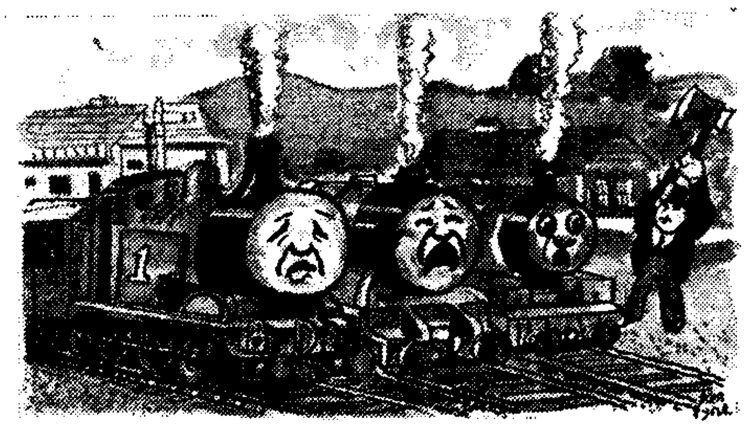


THOMAS THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

BY THE REV. TAWDRY

ALL the engines were lined up to hear the Fat Controller's new idea. They were all looking worried.

"I have some good news," he said proudly. "From now on none of you will be late again."



Thomas was very pleased because he and his friends hated being late and upsetting the passengers.

"How will you do that?" asked Henry, cheekily.

"Simple," said the Fat Idiot *(Surely "Controller"? Rev. A.)*

"I'm going to cancel you all, so then none of you can be late ever again."

"Hoorah!" shouted no one.

© The Rev. Tawdry 2003

NEXT WEEK: The adventures of Ron The Replacement Bus Service.

THE LOVE STORY OF THE CENTURY

LORD GNOME has paid £10 million to bring you the most moving love letters ever written – from Diana, the late Queen of Hearts, to the handsome and dashing young army officer who won her undying love.

Now read in her own words the intimate story of a tragic love affair that was to change the world for ever.

Lord Gnome himself wept openly as he wrote out the cheque which was to make it possible for the public to share in a piece of living history, written in words that will remain engraved on the nation's soul until the end of time.

Sandringham

October 3

Darling Wombie

It was really sweeeet of you to send me a postcard from the Gulf. It looks really lovely with all that sand and palm trees. If only we could be there together, just you and me. Wouldn't that be soooooper? Must dash – Chazza's just come in with some pheasants he's shot.

Ciao!!!

Squeegee

KENSINGTON PALACE

July 1

Darling Wombat!

It was brill to see you yesterday. See you again soon, ok, ya?

Luvvies and kisses !!!

from your own

Squeegee

This is just a small sample of the treasure trove that is the GnomeHewitt Archive, shortly to be housed in a specially-designed, air-conditioned Memorial Reading Room, set in 14 acres of unspoiled Berkshire countryside as part of the lottery-funded Gnome Dianarama Experience.

A day out for all the family!

Highgrove

Nov. 14

Darlingest Wimblebum

I have been so, so thinking about you, 'cos I'm playing "our tune", remember – Wake me up before you go-go? What an absolute gas we had, you and me. Must dash – Chazza's just come in from talking to his organic plants! Yaaaawn!!!!

Triple hugs,

your own lovebunny

BALMORAL

Jan. 21

Dearest sweetest Wombags

How really sooperly great of you to remember it was my birthday, even if you were three weeks late!!! But you are fighting a war, BIG BRAVE MAN THAT YOU ARE!! Wouldn't it be a larf if rotten old Chazza had to give you a medal?

Must dash, he's just come in to show me one of his silly old paintings – Moonlight Over Lochnagar. Yawn, double-yawn!!!

Kisskisskisskisskiss!!!

your Squeegledums

'MICKEY MOUSE COURSES' JIBE PROVOKES FURY

THE well-known character Mr Michael Mouse was yesterday said to be angered by allegations that some university courses were nothing but 'Mickey Mouse'.

A spokesman for Mr Mouse said, "Mickey has made it clear that he's deeply upset by the fact that he's constantly associated with such joke subjects as Media Studies. He finds it offensive and insists that it ruins his good name." *(Reuters)*

Harrods sale

A Taxi Driver Writes

Every week a well-known cab driver is invited to comment on an issue of topical importance.

THIS WEEK: **John Le Cabbie** on "The War With Iraq"

Blimey. Them Yanks have all gone mad, haven't they, guv? I mean, Bush is clean off his rocker, i'n't he? He's just like a cowboy. As for that Rumpole and Congerella, all they're after is Saddam's oil, innit? It's obvious. You know what I'd do with that bunch of lunatics? I'd have 'em all on Death Row and give 'em a taste of their own medicine. That'd teach 'em. I 'ad that Allan Greenspan in the back of my cab once. Very clever man.

NEXT WEEK: Borrie Johnson on "Why I never go to the House of Commons".

"Dang... so you don't communicate telepathically..."

'CELEBRITY NOT PAEDOPHILE' SHOCK

by Our Crime Staff
P.D. O'TOWNSHEND

THERE WAS amazement yesterday when a top name from the world of showbiz was sensationally discovered not to be a paedophile.

Who Next?

The celebrity in question is alleged not to have downloaded child pornography from the internet nor to have molested any under-age children.

Said a spokesman for the celebrity, "This is a terrible mistake. My client is horrified at the suggestion that he is not a pervert. His explanation is simply that he was conducting research into normal behaviour and accidentally accessed a web page not showing obscene images of minors. It was this curiosity that led to his association with the world of non-deviants.

"This could be the end of his career," he added and *(cont. p. 94)*

BISHOP, MPs AND JUDGES EXPOSED IN POLICE SWOOP

by Our Crime Staff **Dawn Raid**

A LIST of thousands of names, including those of senior figures in the worlds of the Law, the Church and Conservative politics, has been given to the authorities as part of "Operation Bore".

Moore Means Filth

They are all suspected of being readers of the "Daily Telegraph", a media outlet which attracts a mostly male and predominantly boring clientele.

"These men," said a police spokesman, "under the pretext of researching into current affairs are really looking at pictures of Liz Hurley and scantily-clad models." The Mr Big behind this highly profitable business is an outwardly respectable Old Etonian, who lives in a rambling Sussex old rectory, rides to hounds and writes about it in the Spectator.

POLICE DON'T SWOOP ON BURGLAR

by Our Crime Staff
SCOTT FREE

IN A dramatic raid yesterday, a huge force of uniformed and Special Branch officers did not swoop on a suspected burglary at someone's house.

Said Inspector Knacker, "All twelve of us stayed in the station and ignored the burglary.

"It is unfortunate, but we do not have the resources to go around investigating crimes that do not involve celebrities.

Stars In Our Cells

"It takes twelve officers not to respond to petty crimes like burglary, robbery and mugging and we just can't spare the men from their celebrity duties."

MAN FOUND GUILTY BY JURY

by Our Crime Correspondent **David Lynch Mob**

THERE was outrage today after a man was found guilty of crime by a jury in a court.

"It's a disgrace," said one journalist, "and makes a mockery of this country's judicial system. It's long been a tradition in Britain that people are only found guilty once they have been tried by twelve good newspaper editors and true."

GUNLAW
IT'S A PHASE HE'S GOING THROUGH
KERPOW
OH, THANK YOU DARLING- A BULLET-PROOF VEST
CRIME WATCH
OI! SHUT IT! I'M TRYIN' TO WATCH T V!
DIX
POLICE STATION? DOWN THE ROAD TO YOUR LEFT. IT'S SHUT
REMEMBER SON, A GUN'S NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS
I HOPE THAT'S A GUN IN YOUR POCKET!
CREW
CUP OF SUGAR? NO PROBLEM
HEATH

WHAT YOU WON'T SEE IN THE SUN

PAGE 3 STUNNA!

WHAT A "WAPPING PAIR" – Rebekah and the Sun, that is! She is the new Editphwoar of Britain's top Nudespaper – and we can't Wade for her to show us a woman's view!! She always wanted to reveal things – well, how about this Rebekorr! But don't feast your eyes on this raunchy Red-Top too long fellas – or you could be named and shamed! No wonder she got a rise out of Rupert!! He hasn't made a boob this time *(continued in witless vein forever)*

HOW THE SUN WILL CHANGE UNDER A WOMAN

OUT GOES

Saucy page 3 photos of luvvlies

IN COMES

Raunchy page 3 pics of naked totty (plus some on the front page as well)

OUT GOES

Prurient sex-obsessed celebrity drivel

IN COMES

Bonking stories about telly stars

OUT GOES

Slavish support for whoever is in power

IN COMES

Robust adulation for whoever looks most popular

OUT GOES

Taxi driver's view of world

IN COMES

White van man's grasp of international affairs

(That's enough Ed.)

NEW EDITOR FOR SUN

MEDIAWATCH with 'Old Brillo'

The appointment of the first woman editor of the Sun newspaper is in itself one of the most significant developments in the history of British journalism. The fact that the new editor is to be Rebekah Wade makes this appointment perhaps the most important development in British politics since I myself stepped down as editor of the Sunday Times. It was Lord Northcliffe *(cont. p. 94)*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam General Galtieri, ex-President of Argentina

So. Farewell
Then (or should we say
Adios?)
General Galtieri.

You were the ruthless
Dictator who invaded
The Falklands.

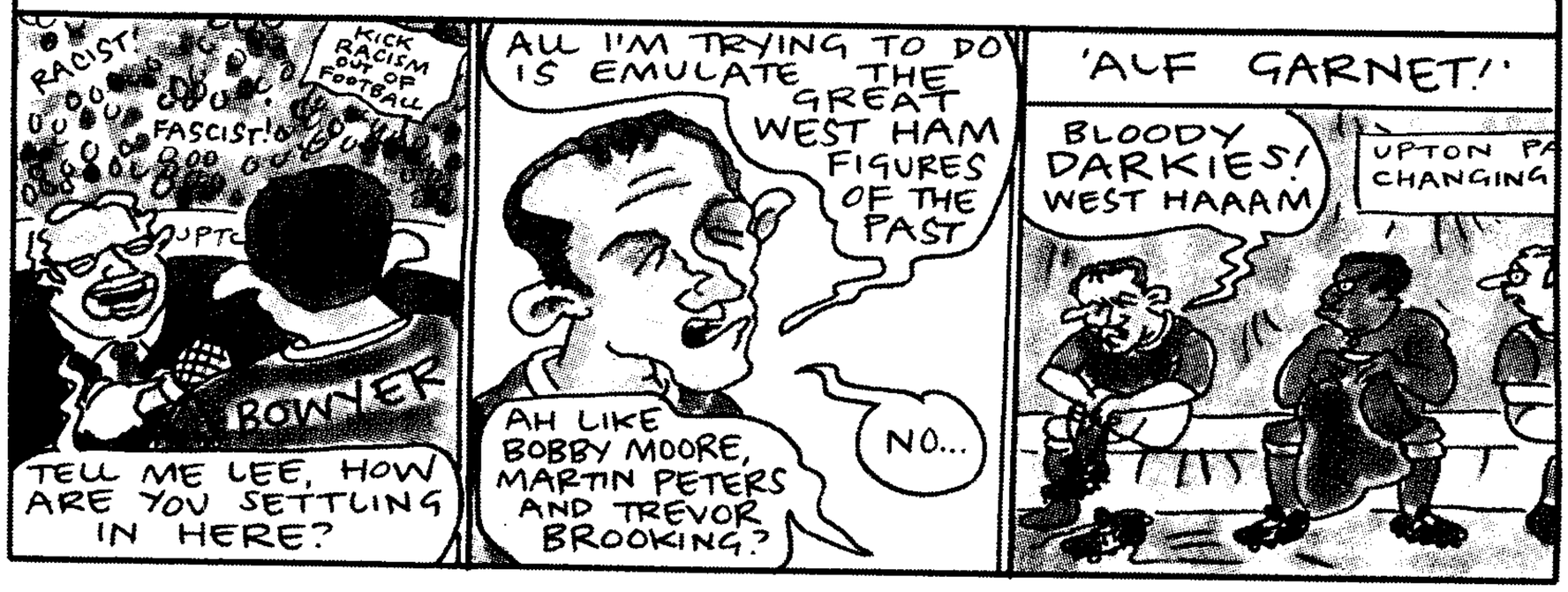
You were also responsible
For what they called
'The Disappeared'.

And now, at long last,
You are one of them.
Ha, ha, ha.

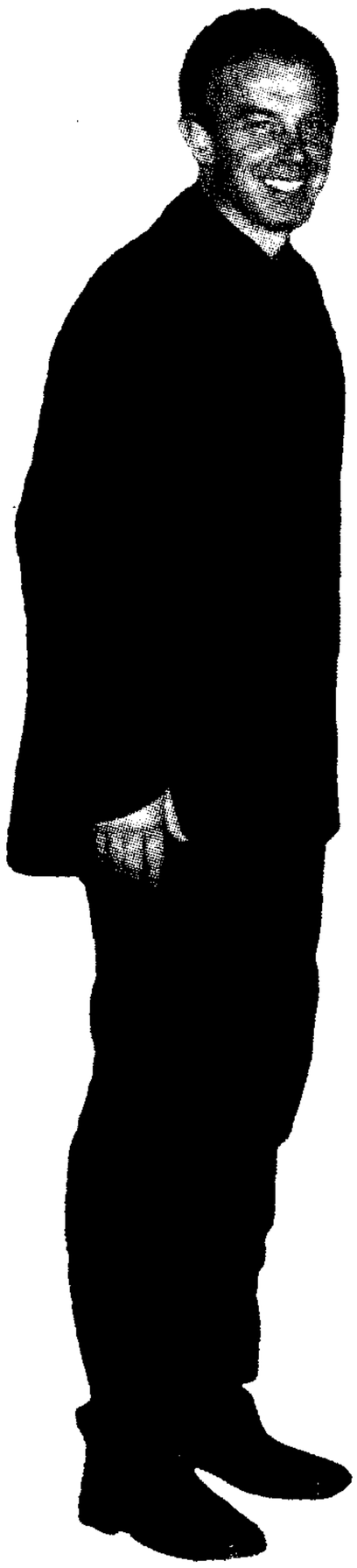
E. J. Thribb
(aged 17½)

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOLEY


RACIST!
KICK RACISM OUT OF FOOTBALL
FASCIST!
UPTON
BOWYER
TELL ME LEE, HOW ARE YOU SETTLING IN HERE?
ALL I'M TRYING TO DO IS EMULATE THE GREAT WEST HAM FIGURES OF THE PAST
AH LIKE BOBBY MOORE, MARTIN PETERS AND TREVOR BROOKING?
NO...
'ALF GARNET!
BLOODY DARKIES! WEST HAAAM
UPTON PA
CHANGING

Advertisement



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THE DAILY TUDORGRAPH

Friday 24 January 1540

DIGITALLY ENHANCED PICTURE 'A FRAUD'

by Our Fashion Staff
MISTRESS JANE THYNNE

A PORTRAIT of the celebrated beauty Anne of Cleves was denounced yesterday as "a serious misrepresentation of the truth".

King Henry VIII said that ordinary members of the public could easily be fooled into thinking that Anne was "verily an corker" and could end up marrying her.

KATE THINSLET

He accused the artist, Mr Hans Holbein, of enhancing the picture, using a state-of-the-art, hand-held paintbrush to remove any blemishes. The King claimed Holbein had thus rendered the subject thinner and more beautiful.

"In truth," said His Majesty, "she is no oil painting. She is more like a Flanders mare." He later added, "She is a fat old bag to boot."

Mr Holbein was at first unrepentant. "We have the technology to alter images," he said. "It seemed silly not to use it."

HUGE ART

However, he later apologised to His Majesty and said that, when threatened with immediate execution, he realised that he had made "a serious error of judgement" and that it would never happen again.

MOTION POEM ENDS WAR

Peace Breaks Out

by Our Poetry Staff **Tom Appaulin**

THE PRESIDENT of the United States today announced an astonishing u-turn after reading the Poet Laureate's poem, *'Causa Belli'*.

President Bush told a shocked news conference, "Until I read these lines I had no idea that war was not very nice. Now I realise that the whole thing has been a terrible mistake."

The President then called off the war and instead of a task force, sent a copy of the poem to Saddam Hussein.

"I am sure that once Saddam has seen this," he said, "he will never do anything nasty ever again."

That Poem In Full

They read good books,
But not my verse,
If only they did,
Things wouldn't get any worse.

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Maurice Gibb, member of the popular singing group known as the Bee Gees

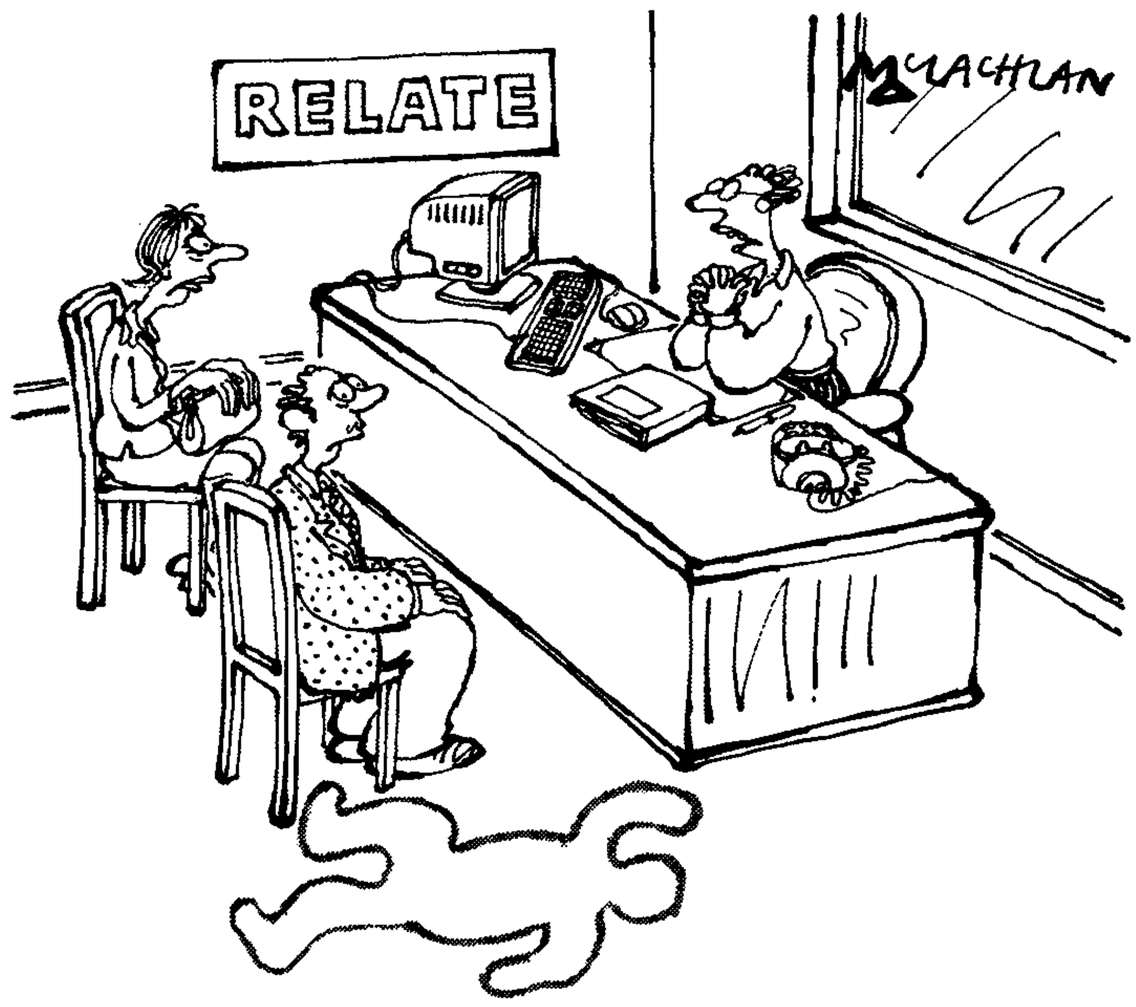
So. Farewell then
Maurice Gibb.

You were married
To Lulu
Briefly.

'Staying Alive'.
That was your
Biggest hit.

But it would not be
Appropriate
For the remaining
Members of the
Bee Gees
To sing it at
Your funeral.

B.G. Thribb
(aged 17½)



"Of course, you must bear in mind we've not got a 100 percent success in reuniting couples"

OLD WOMAN GOES TO HOSPITAL

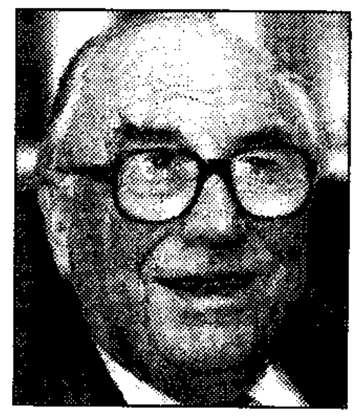
by Our Entire Staff

AN OLD woman yesterday went to hospital for a minor operation on her knee, and was today allowed to go home. *(Reuters)*

On Other Pages

● **Dr Thomas Utterfraud** explains what happens when an old woman goes to hospital ● 'Hats off to the old woman!' writes **Glenda Slagg** ● 'Did old woman jump NHS queue?' asks **Dave Spart** ● Were Al-Qaeda responsible for old woman going into hospital? – a special 8-page investigation by our focus team ● House prices set to tumble after old woman goes to hospital, by **Paul Dacre.**

WAS ROY JENKINS THE MOST EVIL MAN WHO EVER LIVED?



Asks Peter Hitchens

FOR 30 years a tidal wave of permissive filth and violence has swept over our once-proud nation.

Today Britain is a country where crack dealers openly gun each other down in the streets, where teenage mothers have abortions on their way to school, where prisoners in their cells are allowed to download child porn under the Human Rights Act, where asylum seekers are given lottery grants to manufacture deadly poison gas, and where giant rats emerge from the sewers every night to gnaw at the corpses of 10-year-old children who have been forced into prostitution by Albanian yardies.

And who is responsible for every detail of this horrifying slide into the slime of our modern decadence?

Step forward, Royston Cadwallader Jenkins, the hero of the chattering classes, with his plummy voice, his Garrick Club manners, his claret-swilling bonhomie and his lifelong love of the European Union.

It was this man who, when Home Secretary, single-handedly destroyed everything that Britain had stood for through the centuries. It was his 1967 Abolition Of All That Britain Has Stood For Down The Centuries Act which opened the floodgates to *(cont. p. 94)*

You can now read a fuller version of this article on Peter Hitchens' own website at www.hitchbonkers.loonie.com

Who Should Be The New Chancellor of Oxford University?
Sun Readers CHOOSE!!!

- ☐ President Clinton
- ☐ Dame Shirley Williams
- ☐ Stephen Fry
- ☐ Inspector Morse
- ☐ Lord Bragg of Southbank
- ☐ Carol Vorderman
- ☐ David Beckham
- ☐ The late Roy Jenkins
- ☐ Stephen Fry
- ☐ The Earl of Onslow
- ☐ Someone from EastEnders

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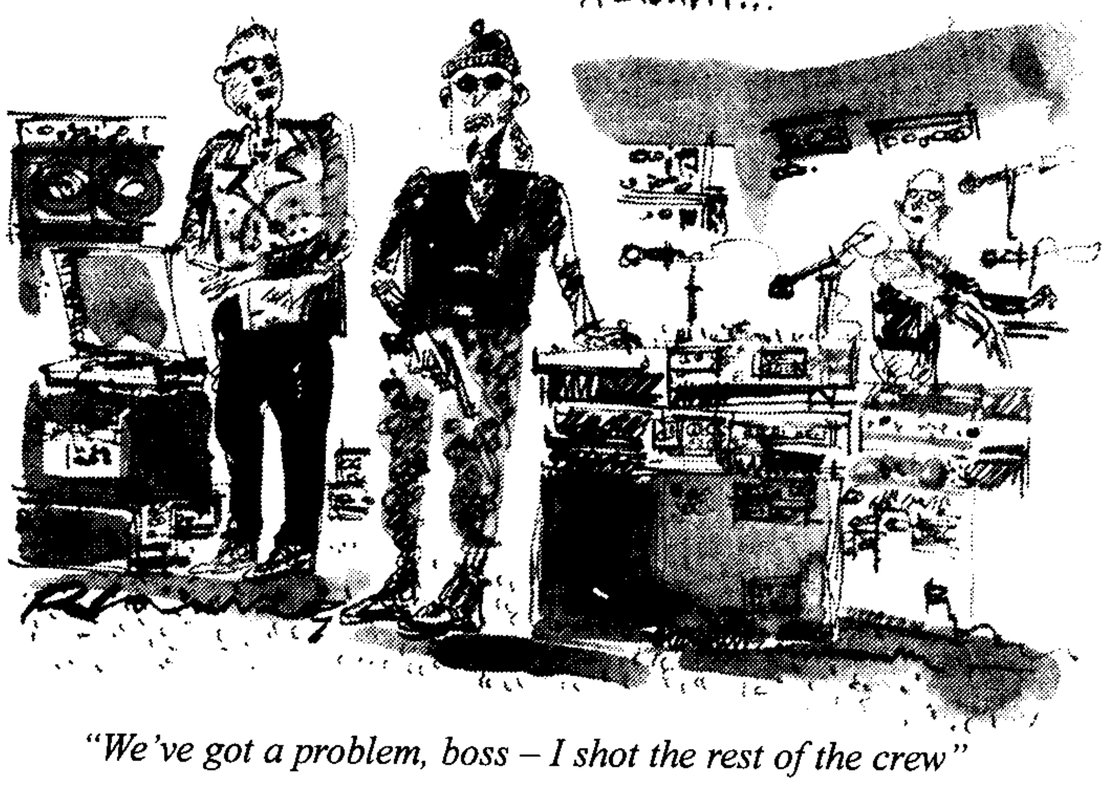
GANGSTA RAP – THAT DIFFICULT SECOND ALBUM...



"We've got a problem, boss – I shot the rest of the crew"

INLAND REVENUE

Submission of tax returns

Don't forget – 31 January is the deadline for people working in the tax office to submit confidential records to the newspapers. If Liam Gallagher, the Beckhams or other famous people's private details haven't been handed over by that date, then tax officials could well be liable to penalties – of not being paid £1,000 by the *Sun* or the *Daily Mirror* for every story that makes it onto the front page.

ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

DR JONATHAN MILLER

It looks from this picture as if spoons play quite a part in your life?

Well, I can't win, can I? If I say "yes" to such an absurd question, I shall be mocked for having some kind of pseudo-intellectual obsession with cutlery. If I say "no", I shall be pilloried for being so stuck away in my intellectual ivory tower that I don't know what a spoon is. The press in this country is irredeemably philistine, and there's nothing anyone of intelligence can do about it, except to work and live abroad.

But do you like spoons?

Before I answer that equally absurd question, we have to define what we mean by "like". Is this merely an elective affinity that is being referred to? Or are we looking at this question in a more neo-platonic sense? If I say "I like spoons", am I committing myself to a statement about the empirical world, where a spoon is merely itself and nothing more, or are we defining "spoon-ness" in an ideal sense, which places...

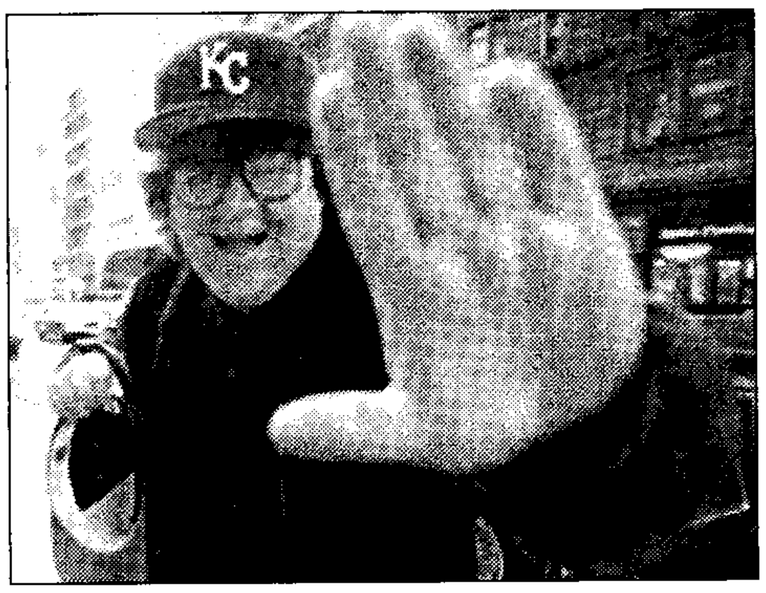
...I'm sorry, I'm not with you. Going back to the picture, are you "playing" the spoons?

Of course not. It must be obvious to any reasonably well-informed observer that I am recreating the famous demonstration given by Dr Hackenbusch, the celebrated Viennese mesmerist, who in 1784 showed how the sound of spoons banged together rhythmically on a tabletop can induce a state of profound sleep in the patient...

...z-z-z-z-z-z-z

NEXT WEEK: Lynne Barber – *"Me and My Barbour."*

DIARY



MICHAEL MOORE

Don't get me wrong. I love Britain. Love it. And not just because it begins with a B and ends with an N – just like BUN, my numero uno favorito mid-morning snack!

And while we're on the subject of buns, many of my good friends who happen to be poor like to eat them too – and that's great news. In fact, research proves that 20% less people in the USA commit a serious felony while eating a bun.

So why, I hear you ask, doesn't Bush distribute buns free – thereby cutting crime by 80% at a stroke? Right first time: the guy's under the thumb of the corporate chocolate cookie lobby – and they sure as hell don't want to see the shares in their alternative mid-morning snack go through the floor.

Where was I? Oh yeah. Britain – and how I just love the place. And you Brits love me in return – hey, guys, my book's still right up there at Number One in your best-seller lists, so how the hell could I not love you? Spread the word.

But first let me ask you a simple question. So, um, why exactly is it you guys don't kick shit at the idea of living under a fascist dictatorship? Not once – not EVER – has anyone come up to me in the wonderful streets of London and having thanked me for impacting their lives, etc, said to me, "Gee Whizz, Mike, you've done some great things in your movies and in your best-selling books – but it's hard as hell living under the iron boot of a fascist dictatorship."

Whyever not? Hey, guys – get a life, willya? Now, I don't intend to waste time rehashing the past 1000 years of British history. Whaddya think I am – a nerd or something? But here's something you sure as hell should know about your country:

FACT: For the past years, Queen Two's husband, Tony, has secetly imprisoned nearly 1000 – that's 1000, goddammit! – political dissidents at an address in London's Marylebone Road.

Just last year, I took my cameras to this top-secret location – Codename Tussaud. Well, hey, guess what? It's a building without windows – your Rulers have sure been studying their Stalin. Having exchanged some of my own money for a ticket, I barged my way past the dumbstruck doorman. What I then saw put a chill in my soul (not my SOLE, dumbo – my sneakers may be inexpensive, but just this minute they're warm as Mom's cherry pie!!). Inside, I was confronted by rows of former statesmen, rock stars and social agitators – each one of 'em forced to stand still for hours at a time, and not even permitted to blink, dammit. And let me tell you this: those guys looked ILL.

"So hey, Mike – what's the big deal? Why should we care about a bunch of guys imprisoned by the Blair regime in a secret address in North West London? What's that to do with us?"

Oh, sure – right now, I guess you have a hundred good excuses for not caring. Right this minute, Christine Aguilera might be swinging her pretty little butt on MTV. That's not just one good excuse – it's two! But why not set the DVD to Record – and then you can watch Christine's butt over and over again, late at night. Mmmm....beautiful!

And now you've done that – give a bit of serious thought to what Mike has to say.

One day you, too, might be locked up in Tussaud's, forced at gunpoint by Blair and Queen 2 to stand still and suffer the pokings and the insults of onlookers for the rest of your days.

Is that what you Britons want? Well – is it? I don't think so. So this is what you gotta do. Write to the chief warder at madame.tussaud@aol.com and DEMAND that he release those innocent folk RIGHT NOW. And let's hope it's not too late.

Jeez, guys.

Let's kick shit.

The tobacco companies (all run by men) have been extremely successful in convincing the firearms lobby to pacify the car manufacturers by distributing crack cocaine to 132 nuclear plants so that now up to 69% of women between the ages of 28 and 39 are unable to drive their kids to school without inhaling harmful emissions from the ozone layer caused by toxic fumes radiated by President Bush under direct instructions from – yes, you guessed it – the tobacco companies.

So where does that leave the rest of us? Ho-hum. From where I'm standing, guys, it looks like we're drowning in deep doggy-do. And I don't know 'bout you, but deep doggy-do's not something I like to drown in – at least not when there's a Pammy Anderson movie just started on the TV!!!

What in hell's happening to our old folk?

Time was, they'd be plenty of them around. Nice old folk. Good old folk.

Decent old folk. Your grandmom. My grandmom. Everybody's grandmoms. But listen up, guys. As I get older, I've started noticing that something's up.

Yup. The old folk are dying off. My grandmom. Your grandmom. Everybody's grandmoms. They're not there for us anymore.

And, boy, that hurts. That hurts one helluva lot. 'Cos my grandmom's cherry pie was the most lip-smackin' cherry pie that ever there was.

FACT: 97% of people who die in this country are either old or quite old. 97%! I hear you say. Hey, Mike, that's quite a number of old folk to be killed by a single government! So tell me, Mike, what exactly has the Bush administration got against our old folk?

Here's the answer in just one word, boys: they know too much.

FACT: 83% of old people over the age of 75 know 46% more than young people below the age of 25.

Our old folk know too much, and that's why they gotta die. So what can I do about it, Mike? The next time you hear of someone's dear old grandmom falling headlong down the stairs to certain death be sure to check those footprints on the carpet at the top.

Size 10? Well-heeled? Too right. And here's another thing. Take it from me – top bestselling author Michael Moore – it's 91% likely those footprints carry the initials George W. Bush.

As told to

CRAIG BROWN

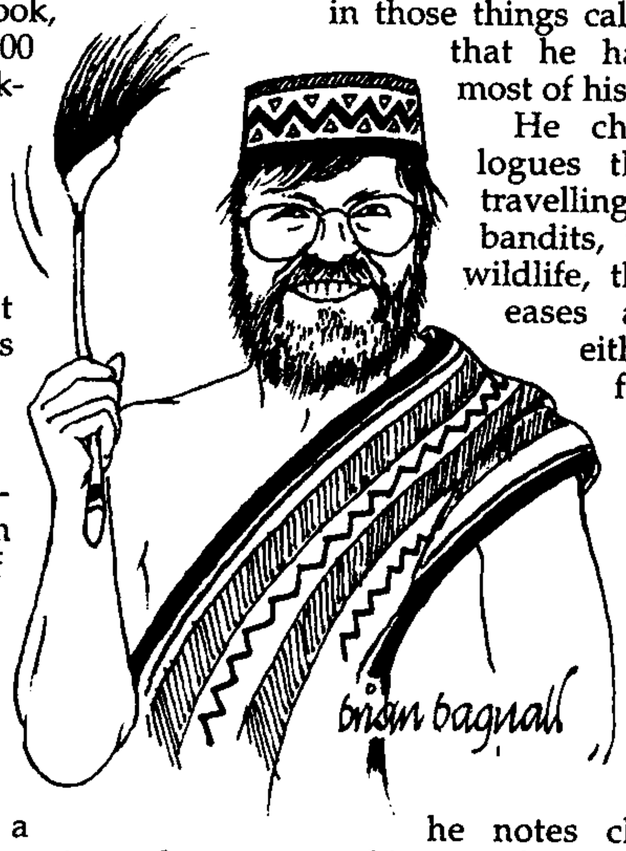
BLOODY INTERNET! I WISH I'D NEVER HEARD OF IT... THIS LATEST STUFF PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT ME... IT'S STUPEFYING...
I'VE BEEN CALLED ALL SORTS OF THINGS IN THE PAST BUT NEVER THIS BEFORE... I MEAN, TO ME, THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN IS JUST TOTALLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE...
... AND THE FACT IS I NEED TO RESEARCH IT SO I CAN MAKE SENSE OF IT IN MY OWN MIND AS A VICTIM MYSELF...
LIKE WHAT DOES "MINGING" MEAN? SOME KID'S CALLED ME THAT ON MY WEBSITE...
SEARCH ME... I'M WELL OUT OF DATE WITH JARGON, MAN...
GARY BLOKE TATTOOS

Literary Review

Out of...ideas

African Diary
Bill Bryson
(Doubleday, £7.99)

FANS of Bill Bryson's wry observations about provincial life in New and old England and his travels in Europe and Australia will be disappointed by this brief account of a trip to Kenya sold in support of the aid agency Care. Though it claims to be a book, it is really a 10,000 word article, packaged as a point-of-sale stocking-filler.



Care is one of the better aid organisations. It spends most of its money helping people at the point of need rather than trickling the aid down through layers of government corruption.

Moreover, one ought to acknowledge that Bryson did at least give up a week's writing time to make a trip to Kenya on which he may have done no other useable research (though he lets slip that his visit to the fossil department of the National Museum was not unrelated to another book). Plus, what the hey, it was done in a hurry to a "punishing schedule".

But Bryson is a professional who must be used to working to deadlines. He knows enough about good writing to have penned at least two books on the subject, along with all his other sardonic ramblings and musings. Yet here he lamely describes his hotel as "nice and comfortable" while a trip to Karen Blixen's house is an "interesting insight into the privileged lifestyles of the colonial period". A regional manager he meets in Mombasa is an "old Africa hand" who "knows the country inside out". The Africans he encounters are all "bright and enthusiastic", "cheerful", "good-natured" or "keen", while a local market in Kisumu turns out, surprisingly, to be "crowded, noisy, extremely colourful".

One might forgive these tired formulations were it not for a more serious failure to gauge the whole tone of the book. This veers uncertainly between breezy deprecation, faux-naif wonder and po-faced sermonising. Before setting off, Bryson makes a great play of his total ignorance about Africa, pretending to have learned all he knows about it from old Jungle Jim movies. He has apparently never read any of the reports that one occasionally finds in those things called newspapers that he has worked for most of his life.

He chortlingly catalogues the dangers of travelling in Kenya, the bandits, the man-eating wildlife, the tropical diseases and so forth, either to make us feel sorry for him or perhaps as a much-needed boost to the local tourist industry. "Kenya Railways has something of a tradition of killing its passengers," he notes cheerily, before making a joke about lions eating Indian rail workers "giving a whole new meaning to the term Indian takeaway". New indeed.

Touring the poverty hotspots once he gets there, Bryson then presents himself as a sort of holy simpleton who finds it "amazing" that people who live in a slum shanty town don't have easy access to clean drinking water, and that the children in a Somalian refugee camp (having escaped famine and civil war) don't have enough desks or school equipment to enable them to benefit from a secondary education. He gasps at the revelation that, in one year alone, $10bn of public funds "went missing" in Kenya, "once a model of probity and rectitude" (apparently) but now "the sixth least trustworthy nation in the world".

He insists that money given directly to Care will not fall into the hands of "corrupt intermediaries". Instead it goes straight into projects to provide drinking water, small business finance and agricultural advice. He concludes with the observation that the poor Kenyans "have one thing in common with the rest of us: they are human beings".

The trouble is that Bryson's brand of humour depends in part on being a bit cleverer than the people he's writing about (to take an example from *Notes from a Big Country*, Americans who think the CD drawer on their computer is a cup-holder). It doesn't work when he himself has to pretend to be a bit dumber than everyone else and to be amazed or scandalised by everything he sees. Because this persona doesn't suit him, he can't keep it up and either slips back into comic mode, giving the exaggerated accounts of his frightening trips on trains and light aircraft which pad out so much of this "book", or simply reaches for po-faced sincerity.

(For anyone wishing to give directly CARE International UK is at 10-13 Rushworth Street, London SE1 0RB or www.Care.org)

Books & Bookmen

■ NEWS from Ireland reveals that American publishers are just as reckless as their British counterparts when it comes to throwing money at celebrity authors.

Twenty-one-year-old Celia Ahern, daughter of Irish prime minister Bertie, just couldn't believe her luck when Disney imprint Hyperion splashed out more than $1m in return for a two-book contract. Hyperion justified this huge outlay on a first-time author after reading a few chapters from her prospective novel, *P.S. I Love You*. Clearly, it was in no way influenced by the identity of Daddy.

At the same time HarperCollins was forking out more than $300,000 for the publishing rights in the UK and Eire. Harper is, of course, owned by Rupert Murdoch, with whom the Taioseach enjoys an intriguing relationship, as *Eye* readers will recall. Last year, following his successful reelection campaign, during which he received the support of the Irish editions of the *Sunday Times* and *News of the World*, Ahern paid tribute to "one of the most outstanding Australian [sic] figures of modern times".

Matters then turned a little sour when, after a backlash from irate football fans, Ahern's government threatened to use the courts to block the Irish FA's deal with Sky which granted exclusive rights to the Irish Republic's home games to the pay TV operator. Could this latest act of generosity by the Digger represent an attempt to reingratiate himself with the Taioseach? Surely not: as Chris Patten would no doubt testify, Rupert would never sacrifice the integrity of his publishing house to further his own ends.

■ THE employment tribunal of the Deansgate One now seems to be months away, having been postponed just before Christmas due to the indisposition of the tribunal chairman.

Meanwhile Waterstone's has offered its former employee an out-of-court settlement amounting to two and a half months' salary, a derisory offer considering that he has been without work for six months as a result of fighting the case.

The chain's side of events seems to hinge on the "fact" that the trifling discrepancies stopped immediately he was sacked. Not so, say his former colleagues. Tills have continued to be a pound or so adrift here and there, on occasion. Anyone who has worked in a shop will know that small errors when cashing up in a hurry at the end of the day are common, and are not generally regarded as examples of systematic fraud.

No wonder morale at the Manchester store is so low. The newspaper order has been cancelled, with staff consequently missing all the current reviews. Coats and bags are not allowed in the stockroom, a clear indication that everyone is under suspicion. The staff have, however, needed their coats at all times due to the company's policy of insisting that the front doors be kept open in all weathers. The rationale is that if the doors are shut, the punters won't come in. The fact that punters won't stay in the store if they're freezing to death as they browse seems to be lost on head office.

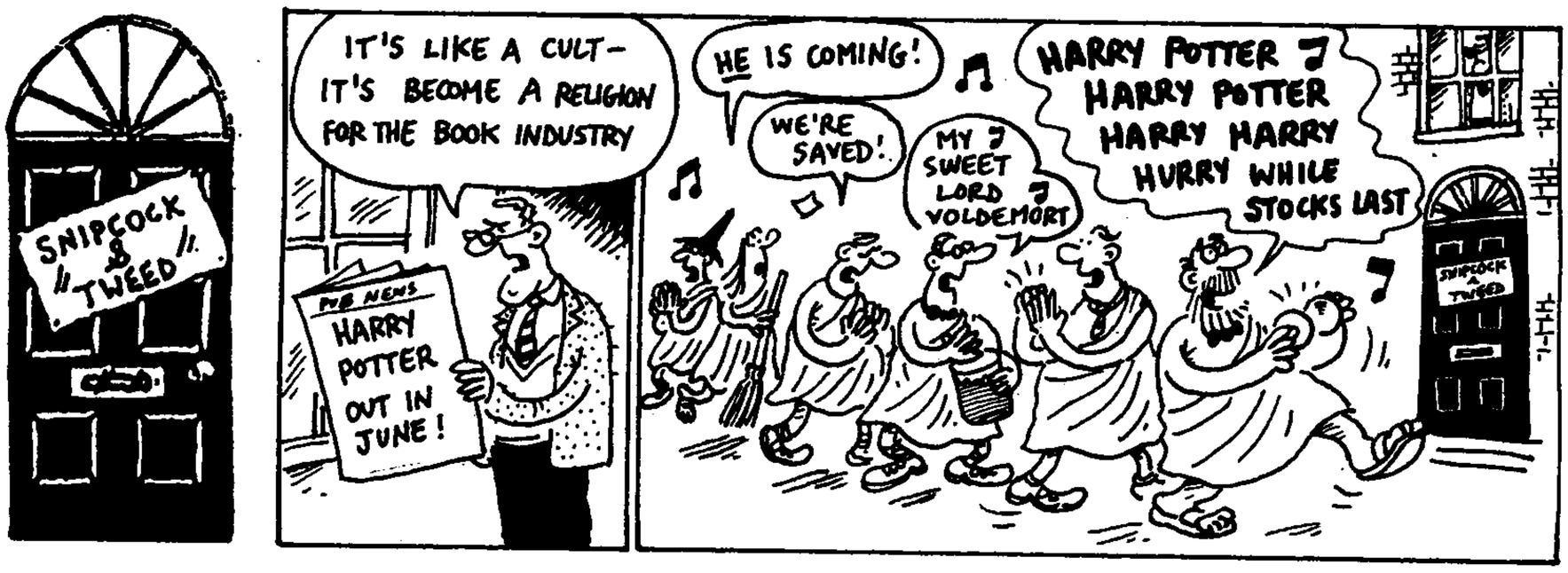
■ WHY has Michael Joseph, an offshoot of Penguin, decided it will no longer publish the well-loved and money-spinning Wainwright walking guides to the Lake District?

The publisher cites declining sales, but the seven books in the series each still average 1,000 sales a year in Cumbria alone, and have been reprinted frequently over the last decade. When the announcement broke, one shop in Keswick sold out of its stock immediately. The Wainwright Society and Alfred Wainwright's family are unlikely to let the books languish for long.

■ AMY Jenkins cropped up in that august literary journal *Hello* just before Christmas to tell everyone about her books of the year.

Fiction-wise, she said she couldn't get enough of *Crow Lake* by Mary Lawson, a gentle family saga set in Canada. This choice obviously has nothing to do with the fact that Jenkins' agents are Lutyens and Rubinstein, who also represent Mary Lawson.

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S LIKE A CULT– IT'S BECOME A RELIGION FOR THE BOOK INDUSTRY
PUB NEWS
HARRY POTTER OUT IN JUNE!
HE IS COMING!
WE'RE SAVED!
MY ♪ SWEET LORD ♪ VOLDEMORT
HARRY POTTER ♪ HARRY POTTER HARRY HARRY HURRY WHILE STOCKS LAST
SNIPCOCK & TWEED

Frock legends

What Not To Wear

Trinny Woodall & Susannah Constantine

(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99)

SO HERE it is, the book that took everyone by surprise, that sold in vast numbers in the weeks before Christmas, that now sits in virtually every middle class household in the land, often in piles, as Christmas presents sometimes go like that.

It has made Trinny and Susannah very rich women, although to be fair neither of them had the air of being short of cash before. It has also confirmed them in the national consciousness as a brandname – last week a question on *Fifteen-To-One* (he got it right), next week a full multi-media package of celebrity endorsements and even more wheelbarrows full of money pouring in. What sort of wheelbarrows? Obviously grey is the traditional colour of choice; but blue will make a more radical style statement, while a red wheelbarrow will offset the green of the grass in your garden rather nicely.

So what of the actual book? Staying close to the high concept of the TV tie-in, *What Not To Wear* is a natural extension of what millions of sadists gleefully watch every week on BBC2. Trinny and Susannah, posh girls intensively tutored by vicious nuns and escaped war criminals, turn their attention to some poor fool who, bluntly, isn't them and so doesn't know how to dress properly. In the spirit of cruelty that now informs all popular TV, the victim is roundly humiliated for her sartorial inadequacies and then compelled to go shopping with the pair, emerging from her chrysalis half an hour later as an officially endorsed butterfly. Although aimed at a female audience, the programme is also popular with men who enjoyed being thrashed at school.

Sadly for the latter group, the book dispenses with the victim and much of the cruelty and concentrates on the advice. Chapter titles include "Big Tits", "No Tits", "Big Bum", "Short Legs", "Flabby Tummy", "Short Neck" and "Saddlebags" – everything, in short, that the roarers who run *GQ* magazine would have digitally removed from all photos. "Tits", of course, is a favourite word of Trinny's and Susannah's, along with "bum", "bollocks", "boobs" and, regrettably, "butt" (the more stolidly Anglo-Saxon "arse" having apparently been rejected). Each chapter features pictures of the two women wearing Bad Clothes (shoulders slumped and expression gloomy) and Good Clothes (straight back and brisk Head Girl smile). But the advice is sound and, with cruelty excised, the book has infinitely more charm than the TV series. (The absence of Trinny's nails-on-blackboard voice isn't exactly a disadvantage, either.) Even non-readers are catered for, as Trinny and Susannah often put **large chunks of text in bold** to make the book **easier to read**. That way you can ingest **the important bits** without being distracted by **annoying stuff like subordinate clauses**, although the presence in most bold sections of the word **tits** can also prove distracting in its own way.

So we aren't talking about literature, but we are talking about a clever idea well executed. And yet the publishing world had no idea this book would do so well. But if publishers knew what they were doing, there wouldn't be huge unsold piles of Murray Walker's and Edwina Currie's autobiographies in every bookshop in the land.

And if publishers knew what they were doing, Trinny and Susannah wouldn't just have been paid a million pounds or so for their next three books. These may sell moderately on the strength of their new reputations, and will certainly be marketed to death (costing their publishers even more money). But they won't be *What Not To Wear*, because no one needs another *What Not To Wear* – they already have one. Surely this isn't a trick that can be repeated. Just don't tell all the other publishers who, to correct their previous mistake, will all have identical books to this one ready for next Christmas.

"Listen, sunshine, I won't warn you again. "Access" and "Impact" are nouns, got it?!!"

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Exclusive to the *Daily Teleg-rap*

ZADIE TEETH talks to EMINEM

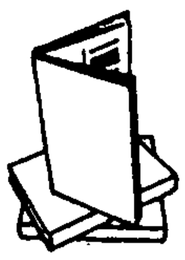
...Because there can be no doubt about it anymore – it would be futile to deny it. Go on and try it. You may dislike his language, his aesthetics, the oh-so-restrained magnanimity of his take on the mind/body problem or his chainsaw fixation. But let's just state the raw facts. Eminem is the Duke of Devonshire of the rap aristocracy. Six-Pack, CrackMan, Ol' Dirty Muthafucka and the rest are gone, and right now there ain't no one to spin that rhyme, eight beats to the line, get comical and astronomical, mix the risible with the visible – all that one channel of vinyl...er, being the truth-telling seer to a generation is troublesome. Some truths are tough and self-destructive. Some lie neatly balanced on the dazzling equipoise of conflicting emotions. *"When they tell me the bitch is dead/I wanna call in at the morgue to chop off her head"* he wonderingly comments in "Baby You're a Corpse" before essaying a wistful and somehow redemptive final couplet: *"The time she called me a retard/I shoulda lifted her credit card."*

A lot of people in rap don't care. They don't, though. Not as much as the man who wrote the following lyric from the song "Grab My Dick":

"No one hates me more than the babe that dates me, nuthin' finds me 'cept the ties that bind me, narcotic, erotic, I'm the downtown neurotic, my only memorial will be a New York Times editorial, gotta keep movin' while the mind keeps groovin', yeah, yeah, ain't nobody hotter, my favourite cheese is ricotta..."

To this raw thing called talent, must be added the moral Olympus towards which he strives. I quoted the lyric from "Grab My Dick" at length for a reason. Read it again. Hey you, the journalist who thinks rap is an hilarious confidence trick – can you do that? (*Yes. Ed.*) Dr Rowan Williams – can you do that? Tony Blair...(*continues for thousands of words*).

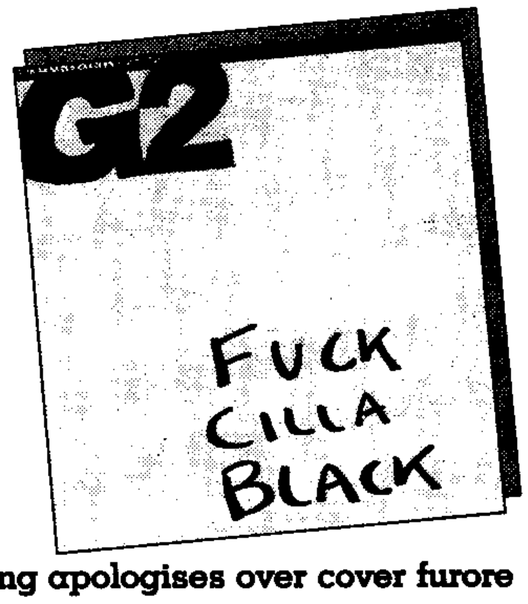
REMAINDER OF THE DAY



■ TEETERING piles of Peter Jay's inaptly-named £20 tome about globalisation, *Roads to Riches*, can be found in Brighton bookshop The Works... a snip at 99p.

"You think you're so clever don't you, Brian!?!!

Pseuds Corner



Wearing apologises over cover furore

Artist Gillian Wearing today said she was sorry if she caused offence with her cover illustration for today's G2 section in the Guardian after it provoked a flurry of complaints.

Ms Wearing said she was surprised by the number of protests about the cover, a white page emblazoned with the words 'Fuck Cilla Black', but added that she thought most readers would interpret it as she had intended – as a humorous take on the accompanying feature on how nasty TV entertainment had become...

***Guardian* online, 7 January 2003**

Were we right to do this?

...I can assure you there was absolutely nothing satisfying about the wave of anger and dismay that rolled into the paper yesterday...It [Gillian Wearing's illustration] was obviously shocking, but it also seemed to synthesise, in three short words, the point we were trying to make. This wasn't Wearing saying fuck Cilla or the Guardian saying fuck Cilla, but the voice of Mean TV passing judgment on a cuddly matriarch from another age of television [continues for thousands of words]

Features editor IAN KATZ
***Guardian*, 8 January 2003**

The case for Gillian Wearing's G2 cover

Context is what counts here – we always need to look at not just what is said and who says it, in what tone of voice, but when and where it is said, to give the statement its true value. The art, if there is any, is in the collision of the context, the form and the sentiment. For many, Wearing has taken this idea too far, and the collision is too volatile... But history's in the making, and most of the meaning of what she has done is being invented in the debate here today.

Art critic ADRIAN SEARLE
***Guardian*, 8 January 2003**

But throughout their music remained charged with total conviction. The rock writer Greil Marcus reviewing the single Complete Control in New York's Village Voice, expressed his "disbelief that mere humans could create such a sound, and disbelief that the world could remain the same when it's over."

Extract from the Joe Strummer Obituary, *Daily Telegraph*

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone, Lord Gnome.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

LANDMINES

THE DESERT PONG

DYNCORP, a private military firm recently offered a £600m contract by the British army, is storing mines on the borders of Iraq in possible breach of the UK's landmines act, according to evidence seen by *Private Eye*.

The firm is an American-owned soldiers-for-hire outfit which has carried out high profile work for the American government, including a recent contract to provide bodyguards for Afghan president Hamid Karzai. The firm runs much of its military work through a British subsidiary based in Aldershot. DynCorp's British expansion now includes being named "preferred bidder" for a contract to run shooting ranges, assault courses and training fields for the ministry of defence (1,400 MoD staff will transfer to DynCorp in the privatization).

In 1999 DynCorp won a contract to store "pre-positioned war material" for the US air force. The firm maintains weapons stockpiles in Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, easily accessible for American forces mobilizing for war on Iraq. The stores include 142 "Gator" weapons systems. The "CBU-89 Gator" is a pod dropped from airplanes containing a mix of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. American "Gators" spread tens of thousands of landmines on Iraq and Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf war. DynCorp's stockpiles in the Gulf include more than 3,000 landmines.

While America refused to sign the Ottawa treaty banning landmines, Britain did sign and backed it up with the 1998 landmines act which makes it illegal for British citizens and "bodies incorporated under the law of a part of the United Kingdom" to stockpile anti-personnel mines anywhere in the world.

DynCorp appears to be running its gulf operations through its UK subsidiary, DynCorp Aerospace Ltd. The firm also appears to be recruiting British ex-servicemen to work on the contract. DynCorp's UK accounts show £4,269,380 a year flowing into the firm from Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. Its Aldershot office also advertised jobs for British "military veterans" as "storage specialists" in Qatar, "equipment supervisors" in Oman. *Private Eye* could not confirm whether the recruiting officer, Nigel "Ollie" Sackett, was a British citizen, as he did not answer his telephone in the Coltwood business centre, Aldershot. The foreign Office confirmed to the *Eye* that any UK firm or UK citizen involved in stockpiling landmines anywhere in the world would be liable to unlimited fines and prison sentences of up to 15 years. Despite a number of telephone calls and emails, DynCorp had yet to respond to *Private Eye*'s inquiries as the magazine went to press. The foreign office said any evidence of breaches should be passed to the police, and the *Eye* will send such evidence on.

There have to date been no prosecutions under the landmines act. When he was armed forces minister, John Spellar expressed "very considerable concern" when Romania's Romteknika was found offering landmine brochures at an MoD-backed arms fair in 1999, but the crown prosecution service declined to prosecute. British firm Pains Wessex also escaped prosecution when one of its salesmen was found apparently offering landmines for sale.

POLICE 5

THE BILL DOESN'T ADD UP

MARGARET and Gary Lupton are still counting the cost of a visit by Sussex police officers four years ago.

Seven men smashed their way into the Luptons' historic cottage and ransacked it, overturning furniture, emptying cupboards and pouring the contents of bathroom and kitchen cabinets into sinks and baths. The officers were part of Operation Rambo, a drugs raid, and had battered down the wrong door. They should have gone next door.

Quite apart from the public humiliation – the raid was in full view of passers-by and coincided with local media reports of "successful" drugs raids that day – the Luptons both had to leave their hotel jobs.

The couple, who took legal advice and sought compensation and damages from Sussex, found the force's offer of £2,000 "insulting". The cost of a replacement door to meet planning requirements in a grade II listed cottage was £1,227 alone; and a temporary door had cost £420.

Last month the case went to county court where the couple were seeking around £13,000 and the police refused to increase their offer. The Luptons' legal costs were already more than £10,000 and the first day of the hearing went badly for them. The judge was concerned at the cost of repair to an antique piano, when scratch cover paint was available from DIY stores; and wondered why the front door wasn't repaired rather than replaced. Given this response the Luptons were advised to settle or risk having to pay police costs as well as their own. Sensing victory, Sussex police reduced the offer to £500.

"The irony is that they [the police] must have spent more in legal costs than it would have cost if they had come round and put the damage right in the first place," said Mrs Lupton. A Sussex police spokesman said the Luptons' claims were "completely unreasonable and excessive". He said the cost of fighting the claim was about £5,000, which with the £500 agreed settlement was far less than the Luptons had originally claimed. "The police have a duty to the taxpayer as well," he said.

BOLT FROM THE BLUE

THE most entertaining feature of the government's privatisation policies is the appointment of regulators from the ranks of the regulated, and vice versa. The latest beneficiary of this is Chris Bolt, who has been appointed the first "arbiter" of the unimaginably complicated tube public private partnership (PPP).

Chris Bolt

The word "arbiter" has been introduced to describe his job partly because the notion of regulator has been so soiled by recent appointments and disasters, especially on the railways; and partly because no one was quite sure who should appoint him. He could hardly be appointed by London Underground, since he will be regulating it. Nor could the appointment be made by the mayor of London, who is meant to be in charge of London Transport but, as everyone knows, is bitterly hostile to the PPP on the tube.

Thus the appointment was made by Alistair Darling, the transport secretary who observed at once that Mr Bolt will be "entirely independent" of government. His job will be to "provide direction and guidance" on any arguments that might spring up between the mayor's office, London Underground and the three private sector "infraco" companies who will maintain and renew the infrastructure of the tube. The consortium Metronet will run two of the infracos, and the other will be run by Tube Lines, which included, until recently, the near-bankrupt Amey.

Mr Bolt's career is a fascinating example of the game of musical chairs played between regulators and private companies. He was, for seven months in 1999, the rail regulator (on behalf of the public) where he struggled hopelessly with the greed and incompetence of Railtrack. After a few months he left to become a director in charge of regulation policy of the huge and highly controversial private energy companies Lattice and Transco. He kept up his interest in railway matters as special adviser to the Commons select committee on transport. His new appointment takes him back into the world of regulation on behalf of the public.

The question of the independence of regulators is a matter for a new consultancy subtly called Indepen Associates. Its website explains: "We maintain close working relationships with a number of relatively small consulting firms which can provide specialist input beyond our core skills and whose cultures we regard as ours."

Among the associates named in the website are the *Eye*'s old friend Claire Spottiswoode CBE, who was the UK's gas regulator (public) from 1993 to 1998, when she left to become a director of Wessex Water, then owned by Enron. She left the company before Enron's embarrassing bankruptcy, but stayed in the water industry and now chairs h2go, a subsidiary of Anglian Water. Another associate of Indepen is Chris Bolt.

PS: The new director for Electricity Distribution at the gas and electricity regulator OFGEM is Martin Crouch. He will be particularly concerned with controlling the new private monopoly of electricity distribution, which he helped to create when he worked for four years for American Electric Power (AEP) and advised them on the sale of Seeboard and Yorkshire Electricity.

CRE-DIBILITY GAP

WILL Trevor Philips, new head of the commission for racial equality (CRE), be able to do anything about the CRE's reputation for incompetence?

It is supposed to be investigating the death of Zahid Mubarek, a 19 year old who was battered to death in Feltham Young Offenders' institute after he was jailed for a first offence of stealing £6 and was put in a cell with a known violent racist.

The CRE is refusing to tell Zahid's family whether reports that it has lost 60 tapes of evidence are true. The information is crucial to the family whose appeal under human rights legislation for the right to a full public hearing into the tragedy is about to be heard in the House of Lords. The family must now take the unprecedented step of asking the law lords to compel the CRE to come clean.

In an extraordinary exchange of letters with the family's lawyers, the CRE bizarrely maintains that because the story of the missing tapes did not originate from the CRE, it could not possibly comment. Further, it bizarrely gives a "theoretical" hint that the tapes may have gone missing from another jail it is investigating.

Imran Khan, the family's solicitor, said: "The CRE's conduct has been extraordinary from beginning to end. It is outrageous that we are being forced to expend public funds to get answers to simple questions in order to provide accurate information for the House of Lords."

Not suprisingly the CRE refused to give any information to the *Eye* either. All we do know is that more than two years after it first started looking at the case, and 17 months after it offered its first deadline of July 2001, the CRE report is still not published.

INLAND REVENUE

ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU PUK

GUEST of honour at the annual lunch of the Chartered Institute of Taxation on 9 January was the chairman of the Inland Revenue, Sir Nicholas Montagu. Sir Nicholas easily matched his usual high standard in classical clichés – "Times change and we must change with them" – but the main purpose of his speech was to announce a "get tough" policy on tax avoidance.

He defended his new Large Business Office, savaged in the *Guardian* and the *Eye* for its generous approach to big business and multinationals, but he emphasised his opposition to tax avoidance, which he described as "dodging".

Oddly, he did not mention the recent accounts of the Inland Revenue which show that it recovered even less money from avoiders and evaders than in 2000-2001. Instead he assured his sceptical audience: "We will continue to provide ministers with the advice and support they need to block objectionable avoidance measures promptly."

Two other matters must have escaped him. The first is undoubtedly the most monstrous tax avoidance scheme in recent years: the sale of 600 public buildings owned by the Inland Revenue and Customs to a company based in a tax haven, Bermuda. This scheme was hatched by a combination of international speculators and millionaires – and senior officials at Sir Nicholas's own Inland Revenue.

Throughout the entire process, these officials, including Sir Nicholas, steadfastly refused to pass on the main facts of the avoidance scheme to treasury ministers. So when Sir Nicholas says he will "continue to provide ministers with the advice and support they need to block objectionable tax avoidance measures", he does not say a word about his organisation's failure even to tell ministers about one of the objectionable such schemes and its pioneers in the Inland Revenue.

Some interesting facts about this scheme have, however, now been exposed in an anonymous letter to the government watchdog, the auditor general. The letter, which has come into the *Eye*'s possession, purports to have been sent by an employee of the Revenue. It starts by apologising for its anonymity, which it explains as follows: "I am only too well aware of the difficulties that can ensue for a 'whistleblower' in a department such as mine, especially given the climate of bullying and suppression of information endemic at the highest levels… You should know that all discussion of STEPS (the sale of the Revenue buildings to a tax haven) has been banned in the Inland Revenue and all communication with external bodies forbidden."

The letter names the project manager of the Mapeley deal as a senior Revenue official called John Gray. He claims that Mr Gray "set about to construct his team, to ensure total control, to exclude any that might voice dissent to any of his decisions". It describes the author's own apprehensions about the deal "as regards probity and the complete lack of any sound commercial awareness".

It provides in some detail some examples of the exclusion of senior members of the Revenue staff from discussions about the project, and the "preferment of external advice from external consultants". The Inland Revenue confirms that John Gray was in charge of the Mapeley deal. He is now, a spoksman revealed, "seconded to PUK". As *Eye* readers know well, PUK (pronounced "pewk") is the former treasury task force in charge of PFI and privatisation. The IR spokesman said that Mr Gray is still on the books of the Inland Revenue, which is "reimbursed" by PUK for his salary.

The spokesman also vehemently denied there was an atmosphere of secrecy or bullying in the Revenue or that there was any ban on discussion of the Bermuda scam. "On the contrary," he said, "wherever I go, staff are discussing your excellent articles on the subject in *Private Eye*".

GUNEY BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

THE deeply dubious conviction six years ago of Erkin Guney, jailed for 14 years for supplying heroin, finally looks sure to be quashed by the court of appeal.

Even the crown prosecution service (CPS) has decided that "new sensitive material significantly undermines the crown's position to such an extent that no sensible argument could be mounted to maintain the safety of this conviction".

Eye readers will recall that it was secret "sensitive" material withheld from Guney's defence team and the jury that played a major part in his conviction in the first place. The crown used public interest immunity (PII) certificates to conceal evidence believed to relate, among other things, to police and their informants.

Guney, 38, owned a lucrative mobile phone business and has always maintained his innocence, claiming he was fitted up by a business rival in collusion with bent police. Officers, apparently acting on a tip-off, entered Guney's home in Woodford Green, Essex, with a search warrant. In his young daughter's bedroom cupboard they found a semi-automatic pistol wrapped in cling film, 140 rounds of ammunition and 4.99kgs of heroin – estimated street value £750,000.

While PII certificates protected prosecution material in the case, loopholes in the evidence it presented gave weight to Guney's claims of innocence. There was no fingerprint or DNA evidence linking him to the drugs, gun or ammunition; there was no proof he'd ever profited from drug dealing; no drug paraphernalia was ever found on his property; and the cling film wrapping the handgun was different to that found in the house.

A serving police officer, aware that Guney had in the past had difficulties with the rivals, gave evidence on his behalf, saying he may indeed have been set up. But Guney was convicted of possessing class A drugs for supply and arms without a licence.

Further concerns about a possible miscarriage of justice were raised when tape recordings came to light supposedly of detectives offering to "scupper" Guney's trial in return for £50,000 from Guney's millionaire father, Ramadan Guney. Ramadan is the Turkish Cypriot businessman who stood bail for disgraced Polly Peck tycoon Asil Nadir in 1990. Although the Met's anti-corruption unit investigated the tapes, it concluded there was insufficient evidence for a prosecution.

Guney's case was sent to the court of appeal for consideration last summer by the criminal cases review commission. It was deeply concerned about the conviction but said it could not give too many details because they were, er, too "sensitive".

The safety or otherwise is entirely a matter for the appeal court, but when the prosecution disowns its own case, as it has now done, Guney's freedom from jail becomes a formality. The question is: will the judges disclose this "sensitive" material in the public interest?

FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS...

■ **PROACTIVE SPORTS:** Another scoop for Alan Nixon, Cheshire sports writer and shareholder in Proactive Sports, the well-known sports agency.

On 7 January his byline appeared on his story in the *Independent* about Proactive's latest client, the 17-year-old Everton starlet Wayne Rooney, tipped by many as a future England player. Nixon's story revealed that Everton FC "moved quickly to try and secure Rooney to a long-term deal". Apparently Rooney is still on the books as a "scholar" and can move to another club any time he likes without bringing in the appropriate lucre to Everton.

Inquiries from Real Madrid sent Everton into a panic and Paul Stretford, chief executive of Proactive, who now represents Rooney, went to Goodison Park for an urgent meeting with Everton executives "in an attempt to hurry through a new deal binding the young star to the club". How did Nixon get this information? Aside from his substantial shareholding in Proactive, he is a close friend of… Paul Stretford.

Apart from this scoop poor Mr Nixon has had a rotten time recently. On 12 January his picture appeared alongside that of Mr Stretford in the *Express* under the heading "Mirror's New Shares Scandal". The adjoining article referred modestly to "revelations" (no mention, needless to say, that they appeared in the *Eye*) that Nixon, described as one of Proactive's "leading sports writers" owns a "sizeable stock" in Proactive and is constantly writing stories about the agency. Many of these stories, the *Express* alleged, were published in the *Daily Mirror*.

It went on: "After being lambasted by the PCC following the City Slickers share scandal, these revelations will come as a huge embarrassment to Trinity Mirror. The group is still the subject of a department of trade investigation over the debacle". And who could know that more accurately than the financial journalist who helped to write the *Express* article and was sacked for his part in the great *Mirror* shares scandal, Anil Bhoyrul?

■ **DOW CHEMICALS:** The great Bhopal spoof mystery is unravelling (see last *Eye*), with the curious result that the Curse of Gnome seems to work even where the *Eye* has been bamboozled into a mistake.

In our 27 December issue we published an alleged press release from Dow Chemicals, which took over Union Carbide, the firm responsible for the Bhopal tragedy in which thousands of Indians were gassed to death after a leak from a chemical plant at Bhopal. The release "quoted" Michael D. Parker, Dow's chief executive, as saying some silly things about Bhopal. This was, as the *Eye* admitted in its last issue, a spoof, sent to us from a bogus website. The inspiration for the spoof has now become clear.

On 28 November Mr Parker wrote to all Dow employees alerting them to the 18th anniversary of the disaster (3 December) during which he warned there might be some shocking demonstrations from Greenpeace and other associated protestors.

The legal case he disclosed, had cost Union Carbide $470m. He went on: "What we cannot and will not do – no matter where Greenpeace takes its protests and how much they seek to undermine Dow's reputation with the general public – is accept responsibility for the Bhopal accident." This letter must have so infuriated campaigners that they devised the spoof that fooled the *Eye* (and which was not, very different to what Mr Parker really wrote).

At any rate a few days later – on 13 December – Dow announced that Michael D Parker was being replaced as president and chief executive by a former president and chief executive. The decision was taken "solely in the light of the disappointing financial results of the company over the last eight quarters". It emphasised: "No concern of impropriety was reflected in the board's decision".

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

WHATEVER way the phoney pharaoh's development plans for Fulham are looked at, the clearest message that emerges is that Mohamed Fayed has to raise cash.

The deal with newly-created Fulham River Projects is in effect a not-so-disguised £15m loan on expensive terms (12 percent over five years) with an option to develop Craven Cottage attached. If the development comes off (it's a big if), the cash is a down payment on the purchase price of up to £50m. If it doesn't come off, it may have to be repaid or refinanced. Either way Fayed ends up with £15m now that he badly needs.

The unlikely source of the money would appear to be the Irish Nationwide Building Society in Belfast, which has not seemingly done business with Fayed before. Royal Bank of Scotland, already into the pharaoh for more than £425m, may have declined the deal if asked.

Irish Nationwide has taken out four charges on the assets of Fulham River Projects, the potential deal to develop the premiership football club's ground. The parties to the deal with Irish Nationwide are Fulham Stadium and Harrods Holdings in addition to FRP. The money was provided the day that FRP entered into an agreement to buy Craven Cottage for development as luxury flats.

This suggests that FRP is, in Enron-speak, a "special purpose vehicle" designed by lender and borrower to accomplish the planned development off Fulham's (or anybody else's) balance sheet. It also suggests that Fayed's property partner, assuming there is one other than Irish Nationwide, has put little or no money into the £15m deal, as the money all seems to have been borrowed.

All of which hints at the desperation already surrounding Fayed and Fulham with the pharaoh's warnings to ungrateful fans that he will no longer keep writing cheques, the disputes over the unpaid part of the £11.5m for Steve Marlet and the failed £8.5m transfer of John Carew and the decision to cut funding for the women's team. With relegation a real possibility, resulting in a severe drop in TV revenue, Fayed has to do a development deal at Craven Cottage whatever he tells the fans.

After investing £61m as at the end of the 2001 season from one of his offshore pockets, Fayed then spent another £32m on new players. He has had to resort to leasing deals for players as well as an £8m loan from General Electric, which runs the Harrods store card business, due for repayment next August. With Harrods' sales static and the taxman reviewing his affairs, Fayed no longer has the money or the room to manoeuvre when it comes to an expensive toy like Fulham.

He has already done two successful development deals to inject cash into his business. Back in 1997 he did a £30m deal on the Harrods depository across the Thames from Craven Cottage. The developer then was Berkeley Homes, which could well be interested in another deal across the river. Fayed also did well from the Harrods Village redevelopment. His offshore company Prestige Properties received a £1m-plus penthouse flat at a peppercorn rental of £1 a year. The lease has since been sold to a Jersey company.

Two years ago Fayed sold another depository in Knightsbridge for £52.5m to Crown Dilman, property arm of the Bahrain International Bank. This too is a residential redevelopment so maybe Crown Dilman could be a possible partner.

Either way Fayed stands to make a sizeable profit on the soccer ground which was valued at just under £7m when it was acquired by Fulham Stadium in 1997 from Belloc, a Jersey company controlled by Fayed. Fulham Stadium, like the club, which paid £500,000 a year rent but may no longer as it is out of Craven Cottage, is controlled from the British Virgin Islands. As there are trading losses of at least £55m in the UK parent company, Fulham Football Leisure, any capital gains tax bill from selling the ground could well be nullified giving Fayed a major cash boost as and when redevelopment goes ahead.

"...he rarely gets out of bed these days"

Nor is that the only property deal Fayed could have in mind. Harrods occupies a large site at Osterley not far from Heathrow airport which is used by its warehouse. The site is adjacent to the Sky TV headquarters and Rupert Murdoch's men are said to be eager to acquire the Harrods property. Fayed has also been looking at a possible site in Osterley to rehouse Fulham. Harrods has already contracted out its distribution outside the M25 and the warehouse now only serves the store and London customers. So a sale of the warehouse site to further ease Fayed's cash problems cannot be ruled out.

GREED is what precipitated the Enron/WorldCom/Wall Street scandals. And one of the Wall Street players most culpable for rewarding investment bank clients and shafting investors was Credit Suisse First Boston.

That is why it has agreed to pay a $150m fine – second only to Citigroup – as part of the industry settlement to compensate for IPO "spinning" and tainted analysts' reports. That is why some of its leading lights, such as star technology banker Frank Quattrone, could still be targeted by regulators. Yet all that seems to have gone out the window when the chance of big fees emerged with the takeover battle for Safeway and CSFB had the opportunity to act for buyout specialist Kohlberg Kravis Roberts in its planned bid for the supermarket group.

It might have been thought CSFB was conflicted out because it already acted for Safeway. But no. These champions of self-interest simply dropped Safeway – a client whose days are clearly numbered – and went where the fatter fees were.

Those responsible for running CSFB clearly have a bad case of short term memory loss as well as a moral and loyalty by-pass. No wonder they ripped off investors who relied on their advice. But then the basic City code has always been: my word is my bond – failing anything more profitable.

A US federal judge in Houston has given a ruling which is set to make life much more difficult and dangerous for corporate advisers and bankers.

The judge ruled as part of the Enron fraud case last month that advisers could be made primary participants and defendants in a fraud if they constructed financial transactions in such a way as to mislead investors about a company's finances. Previously advisers had been protected by a 1994 supreme court ruling which held them effectively harmless unless they could be proved to have knowingly participated in the fraud.

The latest ruling, by judge Melinda Harmon, if upheld on appeal could pose a serious threat to those banks who tout the type of structured finance deals and tax avoidance vehicles which helped to bring down Enron and hole the Irish pharmaceutical group Elan below the waterline. They would also make vulnerable those accountants and lawyers who agreed with the deals and the accounts which did not reveal their existence in comprehensible terms.

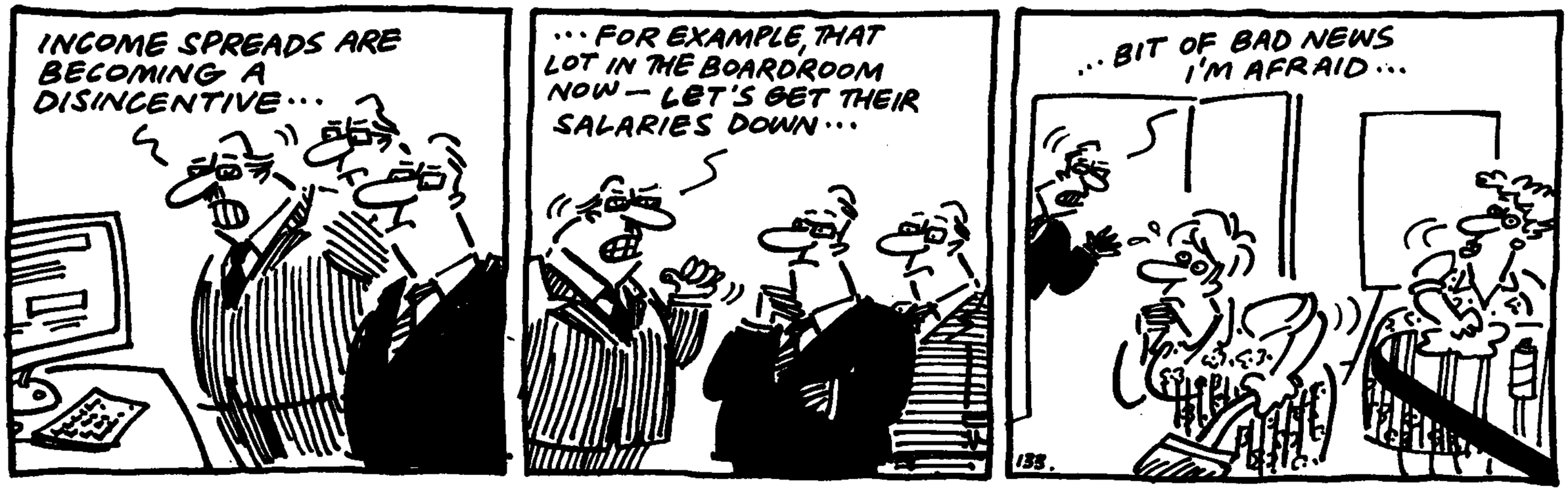
Structured financial packages, special purpose vehicles and other "off balance sheet" devices have made a mockery of company balance sheets in Britain and the US. The sooner a similar ruling is made law in Britain the better. Meanwhile the Harmon ruling is likely to make lawyers a little less accommodating with what they agree shareholders have a right to know.

THE ever-growing regulatory ambitions of Sir Howard Davies for the Financial Services Authority become more detached from the reality of the FSA's performance – despite the support from his friends in the treasury. Now the FSA wants to take over the policing of company balance sheets and the beancounters who provide them – to protect us from Enron/WorldCom-style abuses.

But the FSA did not protect the policyholders of Equitable Life from losing billions. It failed to spot and stop the abuses of split capital trusts which have cost further billions. It ignored the activities of Imperial Consolidated when it took £200m from investors. It has yet to show that it can mount any meaningful prosecution of those

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG

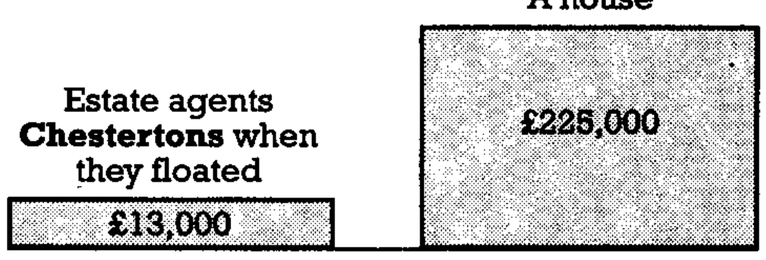

INCOME SPREADS ARE BECOMING A DISINCENTIVE...
...FOR EXAMPLE, THAT LOT IN THE BOARDROOM NOW — LET'S GET THEIR SALARIES DOWN...
...BIT OF BAD NEWS I'M AFRAID...
133.

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

Chestertons: 'in need of some modernisation'

Value of £100,000 invested nine years ago in...



who continue to rape and pillage through the stock market. Why should more FSA mean more successful regulation rather than less as has been proved to date?

The Americans, who pioneered financial regulation, have always split responsibilities between different regulators: the Securities & Exchange Commisson has rival state regulators as well as the National Association of Securities Dealers, plus other federal and state regulators for commodities, banking and insurance. The failings of the SEC, due to lack of resources, leadership and morale, have been exposed by Enron and its aftermath. The $1.4bn settlement forced on Wall Street firms owed little to the SEC and much more to pressure from other regulators, especially the New York attorney-general Eliot Spitzer and the NASD. The Americans have proved that one regulator does not fit all crimes. Yet the FSA would have us believe it does even when it has failed to achieve anything other than inherit the clear-up of the historic legacies of pension mis-selling.

Equitable Life plus the split capital and Imperial Consolidated scandals proved it was just as asleep at the wheel as the SEC and/or lacked the courage to act. No wonder: it has a culture which shies away from proactive investigation and intervention against those it is supposed to regulate for fear of legal retribution or wanting to have overwhelming proof to justify action.

Howard Davies is walking away from the FSA and the problems he has created to run the London School of Economics. The FSA should not be given any more powers until it is proved that it can use the ones it already has to good effect.

CYRIL KERN, the South African-based millionaire at the centre of the £1m-loan corruption scandal that embroils Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, is no stranger to controversial characters.

In 1990 he was running the Reldan fashion group in London which he had built up since the 50s when he agreed to join the board of Lanca, a handbag-making company which was ripe for a "shell" operation, as a non-executive director. The man behind the plans for Lanca was former Slater Walker executive, lawyer and one-time Westminster councillor Andrew Greystoke, whose reverse Midas touch had already alarmed investors and regulators.

After leaving City & Westminster Financial, which collapsed some months later, Greystoke departed from Lanca, now renamed Castle Mill International, in 1991 amid a row over fees. The company staggered on to bigger and better losses having to close down most of its subsidiaries by the time Kern resigned in 1993. Greystoke meanwhile later faced efforts by creditors to make him bankrupt and the Department of Timidity & Inaction to disqualify him as a director over City & Westminster.

As for Reldan, it collapsed into receivership in 1992 with a £2m-plus deficiency for creditors and with unsecured creditors owed more than £1.3m. Soon afterwards, Kern departed for South Africa and a new business life. The history of his time in Britain has so far escaped those commenting on his generous help to his old friend Ariel Sharon.

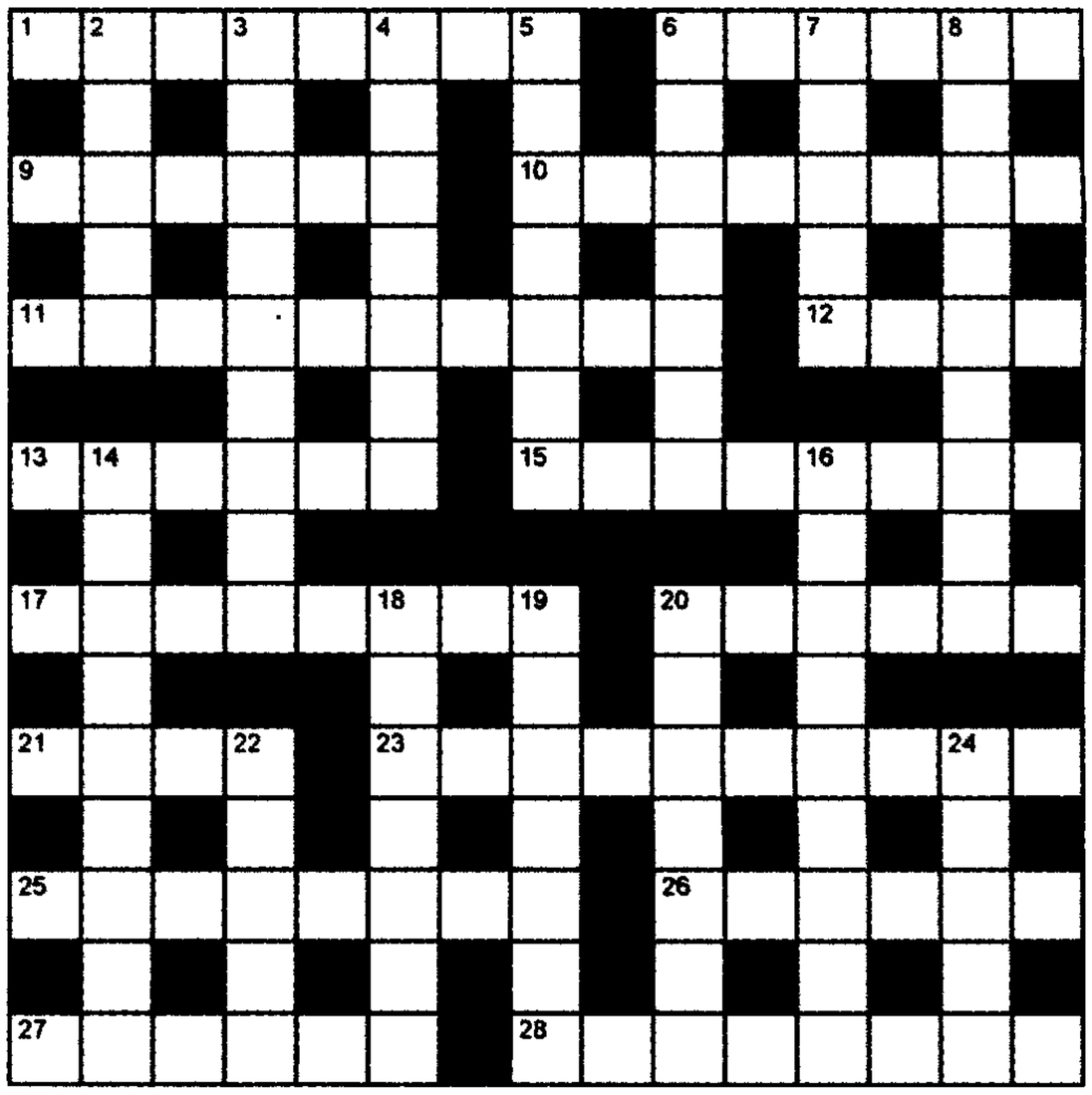
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 227

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 31 January 2003.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 *Sunday Times* buzzed by news agency curtly and suspended (6,2)
6 Loutish way to apply pressure to member (6)
9/22 Straw's flipping alarming ejaculation is offensive up yours! (3-3,5)
10 Buggers do happen to corrupt (5-3)
11/4 Head from Anthea: thrill popular with particular footballers ("ring for article"), though not a pleasurable genital blow job (1,4,2,3,7)
12 Return bearing drink (beer) (4)
13 Getting composer to change ending might require balls of steel (6)
15 Policy of doing nothing to eradicate illness, being twice about to absorb swingeing cuts (4,4)
17 With pussy around, gets fingers rotating (8)
20 Pissed? Very – taken advantage of (6)
21 Andrew Motion briefly coupled with American, coupled with ... (4)
23 ... young woman, humping madly and moving most inelegantly (10)
25 Take the piss out of retiring Dr Cho's twisted stick (5,3)
26 Tony, ditching centre, pursues Right with desperate air of curiosity (6)
27 Communicatory fluid before fornication, perhaps, makes entry more definite (4,2)
28 Tail-less parrot's gone to meet its maker – indicator of which politician will triumph? (4,4)

DOWN

2 Be grateful fickle Mo's left Hollywood star (5)
3 Leaderless? Without a dollar? Prepared to drop your trousers? (9)
4 See 11 Across
5 Noel Gallagher, for one, shoots gangster-style up arse (3,4)
6 "Flaky Kate Moss, er, took some food? Leave it out," they fume (7)
7 Leading you to having a hard-on (3,2)
8 Where to get your fill of underwear on endless related TV programmes (9)
14 Like a novel totalitarian society? Alternative is to shaft Paisley (9)
16 Sucker's defence against a persistent hack (5,4)
18 Once hampered the progress of the criminal club member swapping places (3-4)
19 "Police given a lot of money in sealed envelopes, just opened" smear (7)
20 Military type (US) involved with IRA outside of America (7)
22 See 9 Across
24 Girl that is stripped off in southern Africa (5)

Crossword 226 winner: PAUL D. CONDON

ACROSS: 13 Loman 14 Abigail 15 Flaccid 16 Yearn 17 Tablets 18 Misroutes 19 Strongish 20 Limp-wristed 22 Big girl's blouses 26 Arsenals 27 Psalm 28 Walking straw 33 On the contrary 36 Gigli 37 Overdub 38 Shambolic 40 Apple-tree 42 Shot-put 43 Hoister 45 Photostat 46 Briefcase 48 Legends 49 Liszt 50 Hard luck story 52 Bronco-buster 53 Bully 55 Emporium 59 Entente Cordiale 62 In a nutshell 63 Glassware 66 Satirical 67 Impeach 69 Lapse 70 Larnaca 71 Erotica 72 Modem.

DOWN: 1 Time bombs 2 Ernie 3 Heads will roll 4 Shipmate 5 Nearsides 6 Yellow-belly 7 Off-stage 8 Orals 9 Excusal 10 Alder 11 Lay into 12 Omani 21 Wince 23 Inaugurator 24 Bunions 25 Stride piano 29 Kaiser Bill 30 Sees off 31 Stockpiles 32 Egbert 34 Trading post 35 At a loose end 39 Botanic 41 Pronto 44 Risible 47 Incommunicado 50 House-arrest 51 Snogs 54 Loincloth 56 Icelander 57 Castrati 58 Nail-file 60 No sweat 61 Olearia 64 Appro 65 Ad lib 66 Stasi 68 Pimps.

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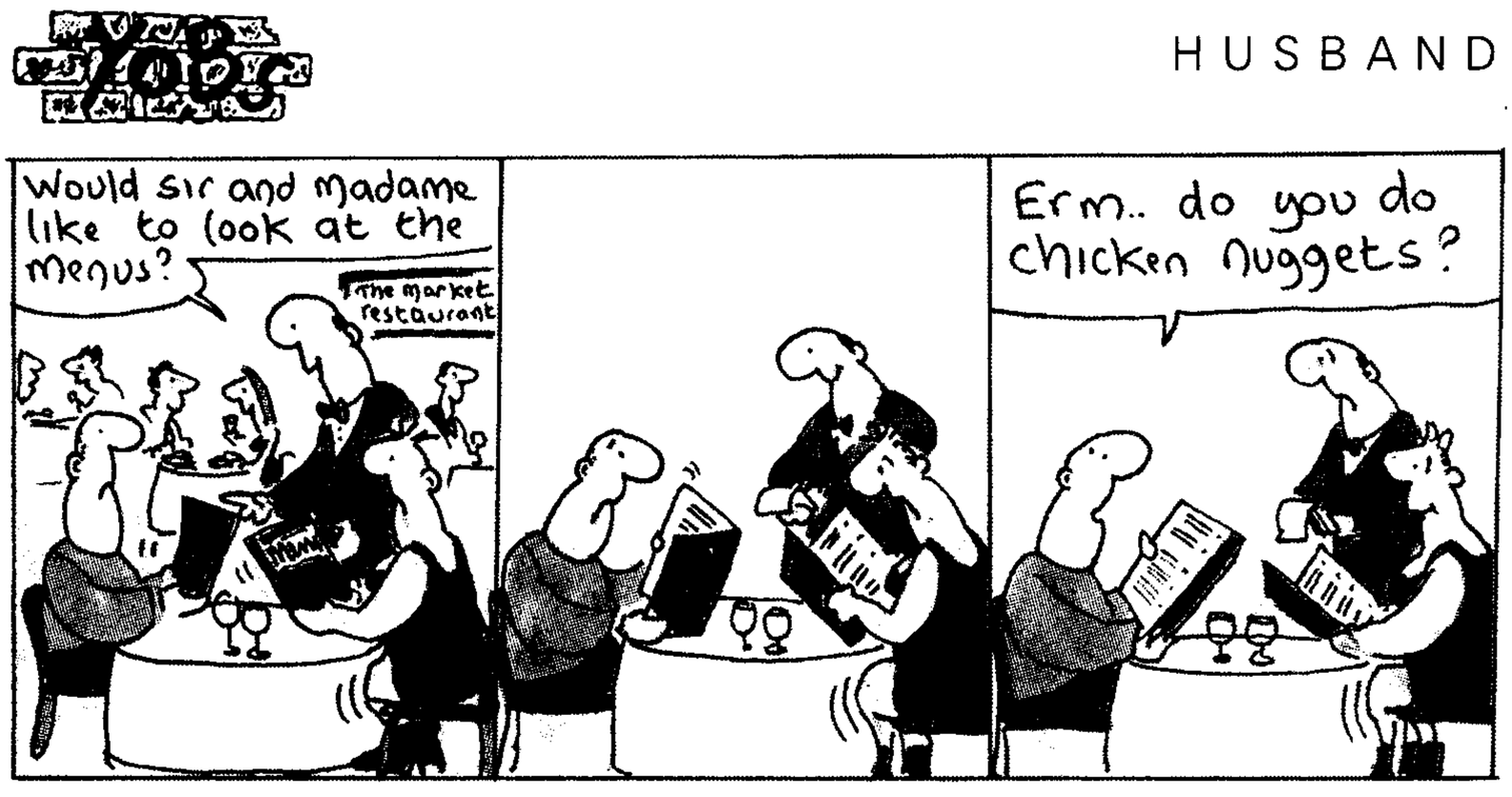

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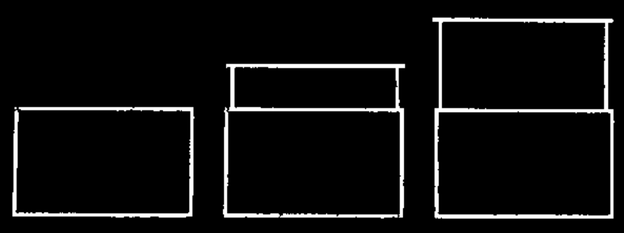

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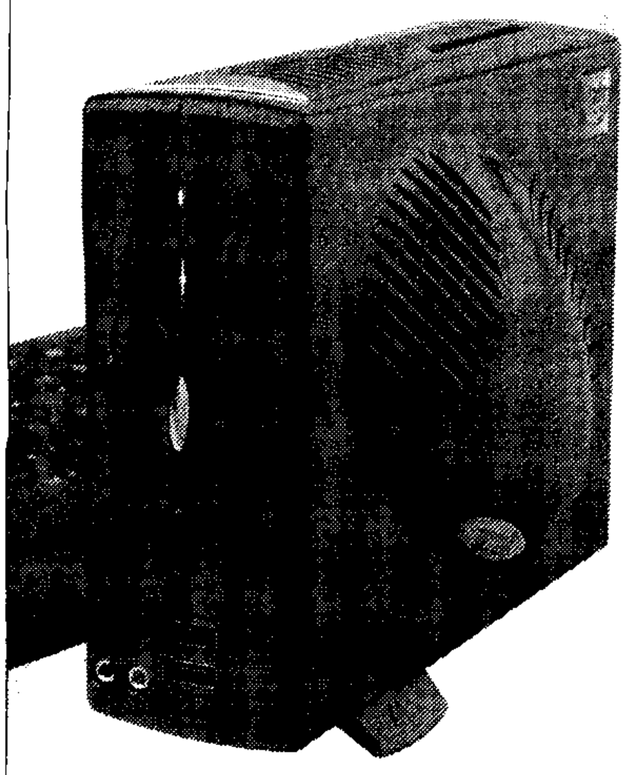

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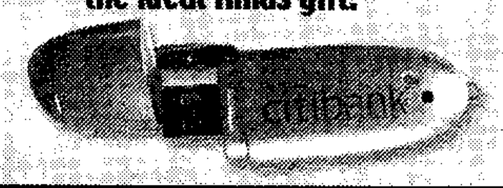

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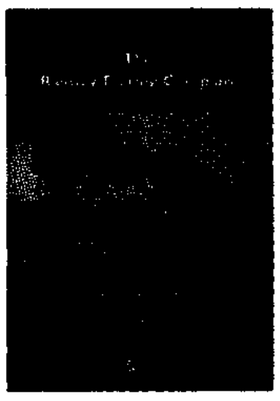
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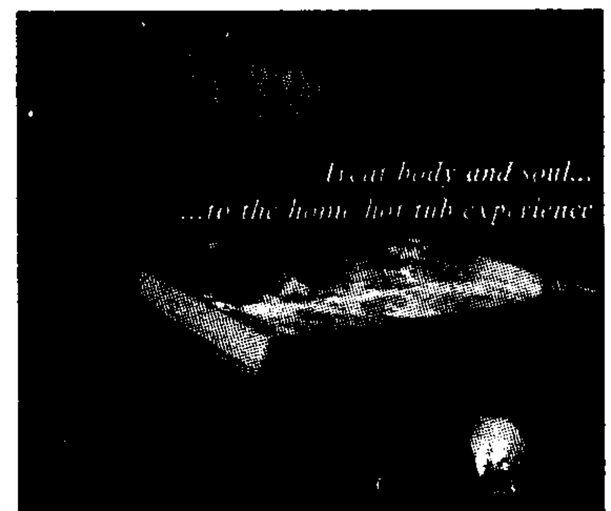

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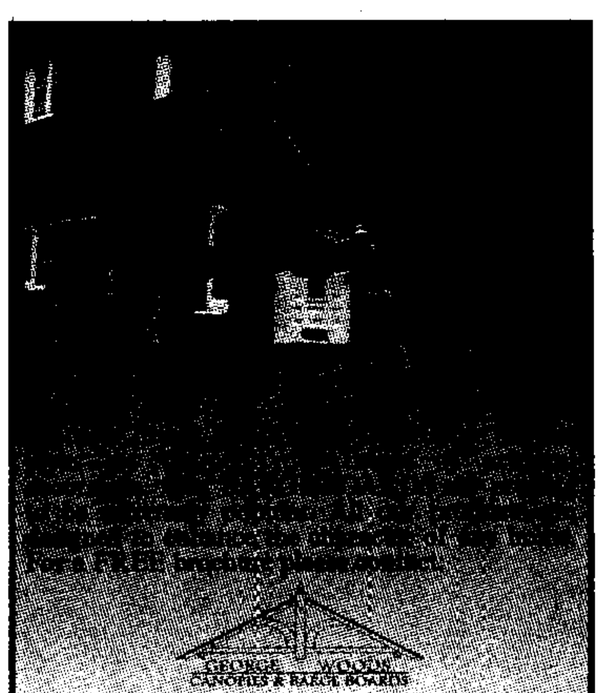

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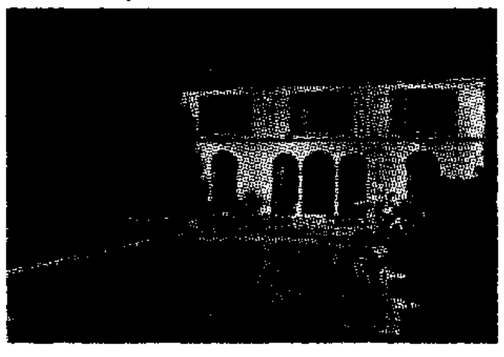
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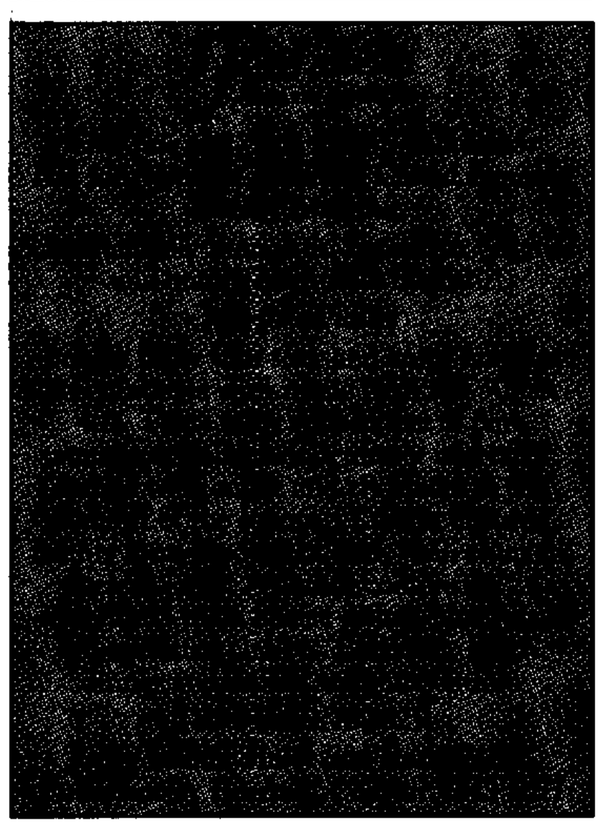

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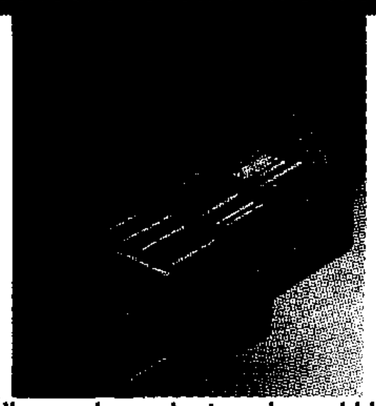
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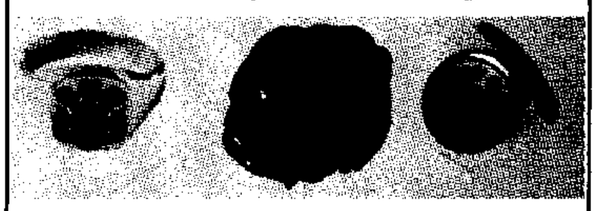
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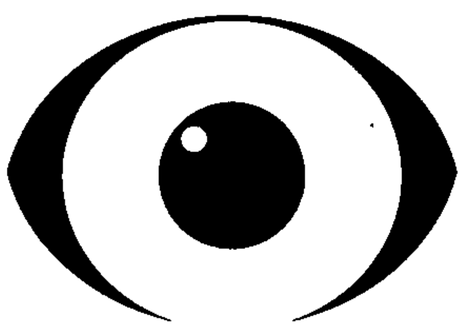

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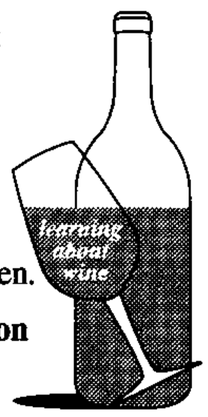

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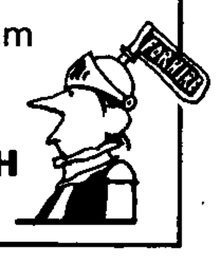

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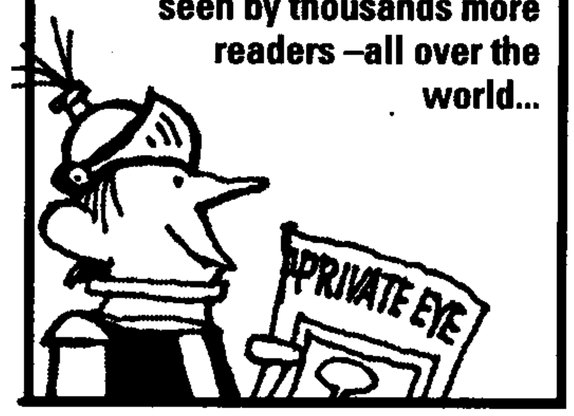

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ATTRACTIVE LASS 30-50 sought for 5 star tropical trip, possibly more, late March – by 1951 boy. Recent photo and why me letter guarantees reply. Berks/Oxon/Anywhere. Box 1572.

BUSINESSMAN, 50, fit, warm, considerate, generous, tactile, erudite, sensitive but strong – seeks lady, age and background unimportant, for discreet liaisons. Photo appreciated. Box 0572.

21ST CENTURY Sean Connery (29) seeking Bond's girl. Photo appreciated. Box 0672.

GOOD LOOKING Hampshire male, 54, WLTM submissive female fantasist. Box 0872.

TALL, SLIM, ATHLETIC, educated and unattached professional Englishman, 45, seeks to coincide with sensitive lively romantic girl, who needs to feel loved, cared for and appreciated (full or part-time!). Log fired snuggly cottage awaits within 30 mins of Bristol area! Blondieflyer@hotmail.com or Box 1172.

AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN seeks man (50s) to spend time with and for occasional cultural forays. London. Susannah810@yahoo.co.uk

SHY, SAD and lonely man seeks older experienced woman who can show him what life is really for. Box 1372.

WIDOWED ASIAN Gentleman (67), surrounded by 4 loving children and their families, misses female companionship. Seeks sincere Lady (50+) for friendship. Enjoys foreign travel, days out with grandchildren, Urdu poetry and a good laugh. Box 1772.

ASSERTIVE TALL successful men who are good with their hands wanted in Central London for prolonged ecstasies by intelligent attractive tall medium build mature professional woman. Interests: Life, philosophy and living to the full. Telephone: 07748 357113 – no texts. (If I haven't yet returned your previous call, please ring again.)

WANNABE MISTRESS! Stunning intelligent blue eyed blonde 26. Seeks intelligent fun loving male 30-50 for laughter & shopping. Contact sugarplum_goddess2002@yahoo.co.uk

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, sensual affectionate and independent lady, young mid 40s – seeks intellectual, passionate trustworthy caring charming, challenging and witty soulmate to flow together joyously. He must love classical music. London. Box 0871.

VIVALDO, 29, SEEKS IDA for relationship in Another Country. London. Box 0571.

ATTRACTIVE MULTI MILLIONAIRE mid 50s divorced seeks and special lady to cherish pamper and spoil. Photo essential. Box 0372.

SENSITIVE, LIBERAL, academic female, 31, seeks similar male, 35-45, interested in exploring life, friendship and more – ballet-tanzerin@danceart.net

PRETTY, PETITE WITH AUBURN HAIR, my client lives in the US and the UK. She has a quick wit, a heart-warming smile, & many interests: collecting sculpture, hiking, current affairs, history, the Economist & escapist fiction. Stylish & elegant, she is at home in the countryside or the city and loves travel. She is kind, compassionate & loyal. You will have energy, a sharp mind, an intellectual curiosity & a lively sense of humour. If you are 50-64, professional or entrepreneurial and wltm her (no fee), please call Heather Heber-Percy, The County Register, quote Ref YCA +44207 738 4470 or email: enquiries@thecountyregister.com. Website: www.thecountyregister.com

SHY CLEVER WISTFUL F sought by M 54, W10 – wolstandixie@hotmail.com

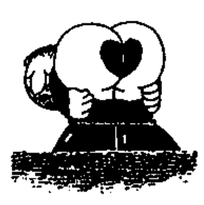
BLONDE LONG-HAIRED Britney, (30, fleshy size 12 actress) seeks weekly erotic lessons/freedom with slim white rude-talking guy, (maximum 37) into photography! North London. Box 1972.

TALL, SLIM, extremely glamorous 40 year old beauty, used to the finer things of life, seeks successful generous mature gentleman for discrete romantic liaison. Box 2072.

LONDON MALE 36, slim boyish good looks, genuine soh – gone adrift – seeks gorgeous witty female 25-40 to anchor me down. Box 0472.

GENTLEMAN 60 – married but desperate for romance and tlc seeks romantic affair with blue stocking frustrated married lady. Absolute discretion essential, photo please. Box 0272.

VALENTINE MESSAGES 2003



FREE CHAMPAGNE FOR YOU & YOUR VALENTINE!

Write your loved-one a romantic, fanciful, extravagant, funny, cheeky, cryptic, silly, absurd, Valentine message for publication in the EYE VALENTINES issue.

OUR FAVOURITE WINS TWO BOTTLES OF PRIVATE EYE PERSONALISED HIS'N'HERS VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE, delivered to your door!

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How anyone at any age can find their perfect partner!

Take part in our FREE, confidential compatibility test today!

What sort of people join a dating agency like Dateline? Well actually, it's people just like you!

In fact recent research reveals as many as 1 in 5 unattached men and women turn to dating agencies to start relationships. And the researchers say this figure is set to DOUBLE over the next five years!

Social patterns and trends have simply changed making the age old role of the matchmaker more relevant than ever.

More and more people are joining from all over the country – from villages, market towns and cities. The problems of meeting people are not confined to any particular locality. The backgrounds and occupations of Dateline members are equally varied – GP's, surveyors, solicitors, engineers, surgeons, journalists, teachers, secretaries, stockbrokers, nurses, chemists, receptionists, bus drivers and even zoo keepers. Looking for a partner is not confined to any class or category.

What all Dateline members have in common is a considerate attitude towards meeting new people.

How does Dateline work?

You choose the sort of people you want to meet yourself! After completing a comprehensive questionnaire your information is carefully compiled and the matching process, in which your profile is compared with that of every other member begins. The most compatible matches will be found and their details forwarded to you immediately. Should you wish it, your details can likewise show up on matches requested by fellow members and they will be able to contact you in turn. Whether it's by phone, letter or e-mail you control how you are contacted by fellow members - it's entirely your preference.

Dateline also has a members' helpline open during the day, evenings and at the weekend.

These few thank you's speak volumes more than we ever could. You could so easily find out how our service can work for you too.

"a few more letters passed between us and then she phoned me" – "It was a wonderful phone call – absolutely brilliant". "I can certainly say that it was the best thing I've ever done!"

A.H. Derby

"when we tell people how we met, they all think it's a great idea! I just wanted to meet a kind and caring person – and I did!"

J.C. Lancs.

"Thanks to Dateline I have met a very special and gorgeous lady and I cannot believe how fortunate I am! We are ideally suited and feel so comfortable in each others company. It is something that I never thought would happen so I would like to thank you for finding this special person for me".

J.W. East Sussex

"To prove that Dateline really works – here is an invitation to the wedding!!"

T.S. Devon

"Once again I, or should I say 'we' thank you so much for helping to bring us together and we are very happy indeed".

E.O. Roxburghshire

How Christine and Philip found true happiness together!

Christine decided to join Dateline. **"I'm a member of the Territorial Army and through this I meet lots of people, but they are all just very good friends. I found that I didn't meet many people through my job as a teacher at all.**

My previous partner and I split up some time before and I really felt that I needed to try and get some confidence back. It wasn't a case of 'I must find a husband' but I did want to go out and meet people and feel attractive again. Ultimately, I did want to find a serious partner but I didn't set out with the intention of viewing every single man I met as a potential husband or anything!"

Philip contacted me by phone at first – in fact I've still got the notes that I made about him during our calls! I think we spoke a few times over the phone before we arranged to meet up at a pub close to my home. I was really excited, he's a nice-looking lad and he was such a gentleman that I immediately felt everything that I wanted was there. He was really good to talk to and made me fell at ease, there was definitely something there – that initial spark that I hoped would develop."

Philip explained, **"The main reason I joined Dateline was that I felt that I was meeting the wrong type of woman. Also, a friend of my mothers met her husband through Dateline 20 years ago, so I decided that it must be good!** Our first date went very well, Christine was late, but it went well! I thought she had a great sense of humour and it just went on from there until I proposed to her on Valentine's day.

There's an old saying that when you meet the right person you know they are 'the one'. I can't explain it but I just knew that Christine was the right one for me. "Everyone thinks Dateline is a brilliant way of meeting people – they look at me and Christine and can see just how happy we are – it really works!"

How to contact us:

Post your completed FREE match form to:

Dateline
St Peter Port
Guernsey GY1 1ZG

Phone our 24hr information number for your FREE information pack

0871 871 8711

Or click through to our interactive website

www.dateline.co.uk

As soon as we receive your completed questionnaire from this page, we'll immediately send you, by way of example, the names and descriptions of people from our database who are most likely to be YOUR ideal partner – absolutely FREE of charge, in complete confidence and with no obligation whatsoever.

Dateline is part of the OneSaturday plc Group of companies

Your Details

Mr Mrs Ms Miss

First Name:

Surname:

Address:

Post Code:

Tel No:

E-mail:

Marital Status:
Single Divorced
Widowed Separated

Age: Height:

Please note: Membership is restricted to 18+ only.

Occupation

Religion:

Build: Attractiveness:
Slight V. Attractive
Medium Attractive
Large Average

Tick which traits closely describe you:
Affectionate Fashionable
Serious Practical
Considerate Conventional
Shy Reliable
Romantic Adventurous

Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.

Wining/Dining	Jazz/Folk music
Pubs	Classical music
Sports/Keep fit	Theatre/Arts
Politics/History	Watching TV
Reading	Smoking
Travelling	Mixing with friends
Science/Tech	Children
Cinema	Homemaking
Pets/Animals	Gardening
Pop music	CountrysideMin.

My ideal partner's age and height is between:

Min. age: Max. age:

Height: min. max.

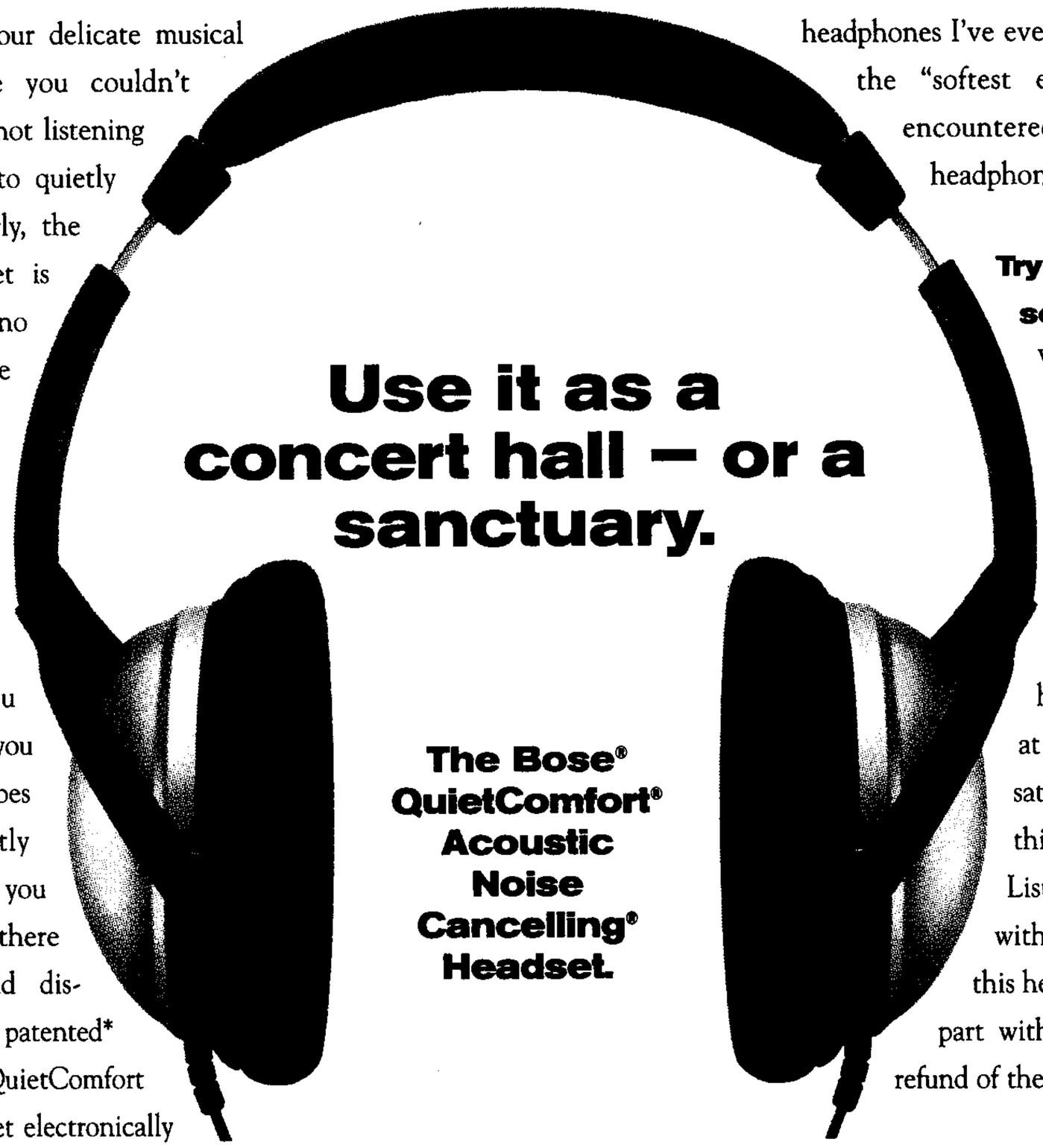
We hope to be able to offer a variety of interesting offers from ourselves and other reputable organisations. However should you not wish us to pass your information to them or to receive these offers, please tick this box.

Dept. PE 93

Think of it as a Mute button for the world around you. Whether you are irritated by the engine roar on aeroplanes, noise of the city or bustle in the office, this headset lets you hush them all. And it does it with the click of a switch. You savour delicate musical nuances in places where you couldn't before. And when you are not listening to music, you can use it to quietly enjoy a little peace. Clearly, the Bose QuietComfort headset is no ordinary headset. It is no exaggeration to say it's one of those things you have to experience to believe.

So comfortable, you may forget you're wearing it.

With a weight of only 153 grams (5.4 ounces), the QuietComfort headset nestles lightly around your ears. Audio critic Mark Fleischmann calls it "the most comfortable full-sized pair of headphones I've ever used," with the "softest earpads I've encountered in 30 years of wearing headphones."

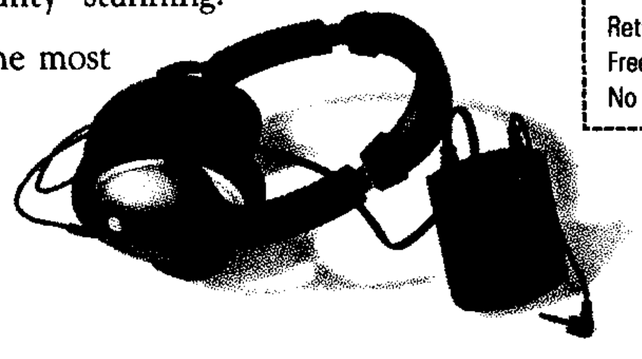


Use it as a concert hall – or a sanctuary.

The Bose® QuietComfort® Acoustic Noise Cancelling® Headset.

Reduce noise with Bose technology. Bose has developed advanced technologies to offer you benefits never available to you before. *Whole Earth* describes this headset as "perfectly wonderful," especially when you "need to listen anywhere there are a lot of background distractions." That is because patented* Bose technology in the QuietComfort headset electronically identifies and reduces the noise while faithfully preserving what you want to hear – music, film dialogue, or silence itself. *Upscale* magazine calls these headsets "revolutionary." *Time Out London* hails them as "positively sublime" and says they "really are worth a listen." *Sound & Vision* reports that they "can be a terrific antidote for delayed flights, engine noise, crackly airline headphones, and all the other nuisances passengers encounter."

Enjoy your music with Bose sound quality. The QuietComfort headset arrives ready to use with your portable CD/DVD/MP3 player, home stereo, laptop or office computer, and in-flight entertainment systems. The *Boston Globe* calls the audio quality "superb" and *TravelPlus* calls the audio quality "stunning." Just what you expect from Bose, one of the most respected names in sound.



Try the QuietComfort headset with no obligation. We don't expect you to take our word for how dramatically this headset reduces noise, how great it sounds, and how comfortable it feels. You really must experience it to believe it. Call us free to try the QuietComfort headset for 30 days in your home, at the office or on your next trip – satisfaction guaranteed. Use it to think, work and relax in peace. Listen to music or an in-flight film with its clear, rich sound. If you love this headset, keep it. If you can bear to part with it, simply return it for a full refund of the purchase price.

Call Bose free on 0800 085 85 72. This headset is available directly from Bose. *Airfax 2000.com* reports that "you will not regret one penny spent" on it. You can also take advantage of our instalment plan and make **five monthly payments, with no interest charge from Bose.**** Call today to enjoy a very different kind of headset – the Bose QuietComfort headset.

Call 0800 085 85 72

Quoting Reference 8829

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